COMMITTEE ON TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ALBERTA

DISCUSSION PAPER #3

SEPTEMBER, 1984.

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Discussion Paper

September, 1984

This is the third discussion paper presented by the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding. The first of such papers dealt with the topics of Private Education and Native Education. This discussion on Public Education is a broad overview of a system which provides education to the vast majority of Albertans and which, in Alberta, is deemed to include the Catholic school system.

With the completion of the Curriculum Audit Report by the Department of Education, whereby the programs of study, curriculum guides, textbooks and other learning resources approved for use in Alberta schools were examined, the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding is now in a position to release this discussion paper.

Albertans are invited to respond to the proposed recommendations contained in this discussion paper, in order that their input may be considered prior to the presentation of the Committee's final report to the Minister of Education in December of 1984.

The Commitee will be pleased to receive written communication from interested Albertans. Such communications may be addressed to the Committee at its address:

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PREAMBLE

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding was appointed as one of a number of government-initiated reactions to the general concerns and embarrassment of Albertans to the actions of James Keegstra, a teacher in the public school system at Eckville, Alberta, who expounded theories to his students which were allegedly anti-Semitic and contrary to historical fact.

It is not the mandate of the Committee to inquire into the specifics of what has become known as "the Keegstra affair", other than to learn from it, and to examine ways by which our educational system in Alberta can better foster tolerance and understanding, and thereby ensure that similar situations will not occur, or if they do, they will be quickly identified and remedied.

During the course of the Committee's extensive public hearings throughout Alberta, the members were frequently referred to the Keegstra affair as an example raising many fundamental issues in public education in Alberta today.

Important questions were presented by Albertans to the Committee which included:

1. Recognizing that our children are most precious, are there ways and means by which we can ensure that a teacher, in stimulating the minds of children within a classroom atmosphere which encourages the free flow of information and discussion, does not abuse such freedom by indoctrinating prejudicial attitudes in the children based on the distortion of historical data and unfounded theories?

2. What processes should be adopted in order that teachers lacking in competence and/or failing in performance are appropriately identified, assisted, counselled, disciplined and if necessary, dismissed in a fair but expeditious manner?

3. What is the role of the principal, the local school board, and the local school superintendent in evaluating and overseeing the teaching in the schools?

4. What processes should be adopted so that the curriculum used in our schools does not contain prejudicial materials which tend to stereotype individuals or groups based on their sex, racial/ethnic or religious backgrounds or those with special needs?

5. What processes should be adopted in order that parents will feel free to react to situations that occur in a school, which in their view, are undesirable?

Briefs were also presented to the Committee which questioned the capability, flexibility, curriculum, accountability, and overall performance of the public school system throughout Alberta.

It became patently clear to the members of the Committee that tolerance and understanding are the threads that must be interwoven within the full fabric of public education in the Province of Alberta, and are not special categories that may be dealt with in isolation.

As a result, the breadth of this discussion paper may surprise some Albertans who may suggest that the Committee is extending its recommendations beyond its mandate.

The Committee takes the position that a strong and open public education system is the best armor against unacceptable intolerance, lack of understanding, discrimination and stereotyping. We must therefore continue to make every effort to build public education in Alberta so that it is flexible, attracting the support of Albertans, capable of meeting the diverse expectations of Albertans and, above all, capable of preparing young Albertans to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Many of the recommendations of the Committee are designed to strengthen the public educational system. By increasing the confidence in the system, we can increase its capability of creating an atmosphere in all schools that encourages the development of critical thinking skills, characterized by values based on openness, enquiry, honesty, integrity, manners, imagination, scepticism, originality, reasoned dissent, rational thinking, authenticity, esteem of self,

independence and tolerance and respect for all others who hold views different than their own.

The unending search for truth and excellence is essential in the maintenance of our democratic institutions and the ultimate protection of minority groups.

One of the lessons of history is that repression of minority groups can most readily be found in societies where the educational system is taken over by authoritarian power structures which impose rigid philosophies and closed attitudes upon the educational system.

This is not the case in the Province of Alberta, where extensive statements have been made by our legislators, school board trustees, teachers and school boards which stand as testimony to a widespread commitment of all of them to the enhancement of tolerance and understanding in our educational system.

The challenge is to translate these statements of ideals into practice on a day to day basis within our school system.

Some Albertans are of the view that the public education system does not adequately prepare our children academically or otherwise to be able to contend with the many demands of our pluralistic society. The same concerns have been expressed to the Committee in relation to the programs of our universities and colleges.

Whether this perception is correct, either wholly or in part, is debatable. However, there is a danger that the perception will tend to become the reality.

Clearly corrective measures are necessary in some respects; however, we have found that the public education system has often been criticized without recognition of the positive and thoughtful developments that occur in our schools on a daily basis.

In Alberta, we enjoy a foundation of sound public education employing thousands of dedicated and talented professionals. We have every opportunity to continue to build a dynamic process that will ensure the best possible education for our children.

In order for our public educational system to function responsibly, the structural components and their relationships within the system must also be functioning properly. The major stakeholders in the field of public education - the Alberta Teachers Association, the School Board Trustees, the Department of Education and parents - must be continually engaged in dynamic and honourable discussion based on a high level of trust, confidence and accountability.

Sadly, these elements of trust, confidence and accountability are often found wanting among the major stakeholders in public education in Alberta. Each of these groups is fortunate to include dedicated parents and professionals of unquestionable integrity, whose desire is to create the finest public education system feasible for the children of Alberta.

Yet, due to their vested interests often centering around the adversarial encounters related to bargaining, welfare considerations, provincial policies and funding, a growing distrust of each other has arisen. This sometimes results in a lack of vision in the leadership, and a general resistance to change. The important sense of partnership among the major stakeholders is sometimes lacking.

Due to the inability of our major educational representatives to cooperate, issues that should be resolved are not, and ongoing consultations that should be a continuing creative source of ideas, programs and cooperation often fail.

An obvious example is the failure by the ATA, the ASTA and the Department of Education to agree upon a satisfactory model for a new Teaching Profession Act, the need for which is recognized and urged by each of these groups.

In the opinion of the Committee, it is fundamental to the success of the whole educational system in the Province of Alberta that basic structural changes occur in the relationship of the major stakeholders.

The time is now upon us to fulfill a new vision, a reconstructed partnership between major stakeholders and the parents in Alberta which will create a truly professional status for teachers, and at the same time set standards of competency, performance and discipline, so that the teaching profession comes to enjoy the reputation it deserves in our society.

In this discussion paper, the Committee is presenting a proposed conceptual model for the Teaching Profession Act which it feels is reasonable and

respectful of the concerns of all parties, and could act as a springboard for further discussions so that amendments to the Teaching Profession Act could be accomplished at the earliest possible date.

This model permits the creation of a Board of Teacher Standards, which would allow teachers to become self-governing, to assume the major responsibility of certification, de-certification and overall discipline of its members. The model also includes the necessary safeguards to remedy many of the "gaps" in our public education system which were exposed by the "Keegstra affair".

In order to be fair in dealing with the problems occurring in public education, it is necessary that Albertans come to appreciate the very difficult responsibilities that we have placed upon the shoulders of teachers in our dynamic society.

The schoolroom is a different place than it was in the days when parents in Alberta were in the schoolroom.

Teachers are faced not only with the daily responsibility of academic instruction of the students within the context of the knowledge explosion, but they are also faced with the responsibilities of educating and caring for children from a wide range of family structures, who may be disabled, gifted, emotionally disturbed, sexually and/or physically abused, and others who have a wide variety of needs.

In many classrooms in Alberta, the composition of students is a blend of children from different lands, cultures, languages and religions. Often teachers

are untrained to deal with the intercultural diversity within the schoolroom. We must recognize their difficulties and help them meet a very demanding and important challenge.

With renewed understanding and revised institutional structures that will permit progress, trust, confidence, and accountability, the Committee is confident that the public education system will, if encouraged, permitted and adequately funded, be able to respond to the challenges of the future, and provide the education needed by our children in an atmosphere of tolerance, understanding and respect.

In the section entitled "Right of the Child" at page 48 of this discussion paper will be found reference to the Curriculum Audit Report of the Department of Education, which examined the programs of studies, curriculum guides, textbooks and other learning resources approved for use by Alberta schools. The undertaking of this extensive and important review is a significant statement by the Government of the Province of Alberta of its commitment to ensure that the curriculum used in our school system is fair, just and relevant.

This discussion paper will endeavor to respond to the questions relating to public education raised by Albertans in communications with the Committee.

First we will deal with the need to set out clear lines of responsibility and accountability within a new Teaching Profession Act, in order to develop full professional status for teachers in the Province of Alberta.

Secondly, we will respond to questions relating to public education as raised by Albertans in communications with the Committee, in the context of the six fundamental principles formulated by the Committee referred to in prior discussion papers.

Professionalism

While it is true that the teachers of Alberta have a Teachers' Profession Act, it is also true to say that the teaching profession in the Province of Alberta does not enjoy the rights of self-governance.

In Alberta today, the majority of major professions are regarded by Government to be of sufficient credibility that they are permitted by legislation to be self-governing. The existence of such legislation for doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, accountants, nurses, chiropractors, naturopaths and others, signifies the trust reposed in members of those professions to permit them by legislation to govern their own affairs and to discipline their membership.

Teachers do not enjoy such legislation.

Teachers are not permitted to set standards for certification and de-certification of their members, and their powers of discipline are somewhat restricted by an ambiguous interplay of regulations within the ATA and the Department of Education.

One of the public perceptions arising from the termination of employment of Mr. Keegstra by the Lacombe School Board was the opinion that the Alberta Teachers' Association was protecting one of its members, notwithstanding the "obvious" professional misconduct of the teacher. It is true that the system (including the A.T.A.) was slow to respond to the situation. But it is equally true that the convoluted and ambiguous procedures, poorly communicated, relative to the discipline, termination and de-certification of a teacher that presently exist in Alberta makes disciplinary and termination proceedings slow and unwieldy.

The Committee is of the view that it is time teachers were recognized by statute as self-governing professionals.

It is time for teachers to assume the overall responsibility for the conduct, competency and performance of their membership.

In the opinion of the Committee, teachers are the best qualified and best able to have the major say in the professional development of their programs, the certification and de-certification of their membership, and the regulation of competency and ethics within the teaching profession.

By reposing such trust in the teachers to certify, de-certify and discipline its membership, the Government would then be in the position to hold the teaching profession accountable for its actions, and in return the teaching profession would be required to assume responsibilities for its membership that it presently can avoid.

The Committee regards such steps to be of utmost significance. In the view of the Committee, the impact of its recommendations relating to professionalism will be significant in the following manner:

1. Teachers as individuals will take pride in full professional status, with the resultant enhancement of their own self-esteem and sense of self-worth within the community;

2. The teaching profession will be regarded as more than merely a union, and be recognized, as it should be, as professionals deeply concerned with the proper conduct of their profession and the delivery of their services to their clientele, i.e. the students;

3. The community will now know who is responsible for the discipline, certification and de-certification of teachers. If a "Keegstra" situation should unhappily arise again, government and community can look directly to the teaching profession for a response, rather than face the "passing of the buck" scenario that was perceived as an unsatisfactory response to the Keegstra affair.

During the past few months, members of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding have met with representatives of the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta School Trustees' Association in separate meetings. The

purpose of these meetings has been to examine ways and means by which an acceptable model could be created so that the teaching profession could enjoy a major involvement in the governance of their profession, in full recognition of the major roles to be played by the Department of Education and the School Trustees.

The meetings were at times fruitful and held in an atmosphere of goodwill and frankness. There is no doubt as to the integrity and the dedication of the leaders of the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta School Trustees' Association.

However, the Committee detected that these same educational leaders were overly concerned with their territorial position and failed to recognize the partnership arrangement that must be a vital component of any new Teaching Profession Act in the Province.

The Committee on the following page is recommending a proposed conceptual model for a new Teaching Profession Act. It is presented in the hope that it will act as a springboard for further and meaningful discussion amongst the ATA, the ASTA and the Government of Alberta.

Proposed Conceptual Model for the Teaching Profession Act

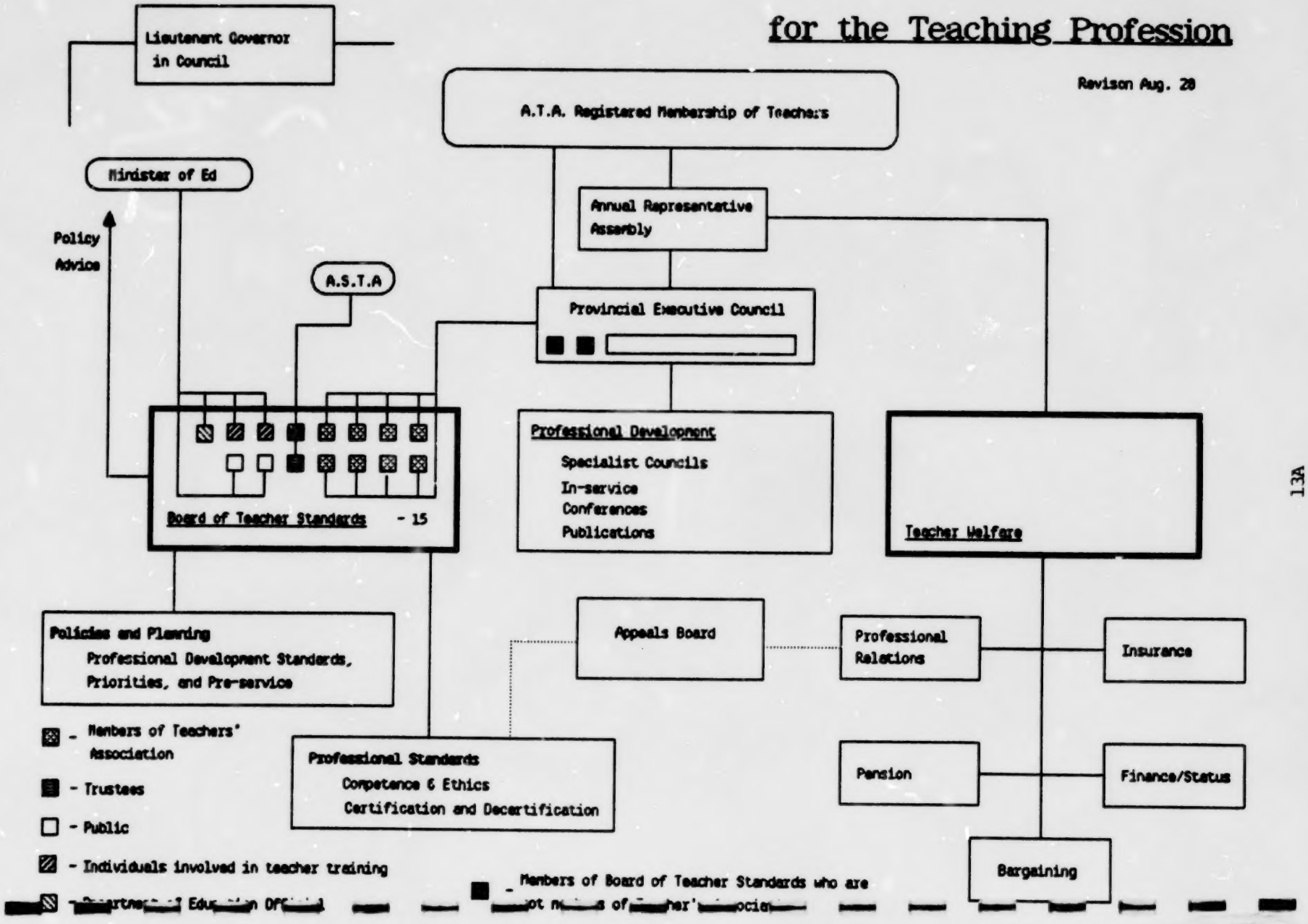
The objective of the model for the new Teaching Profession Act is to achieve the following:

1. Provide a process for the self-governance of the teaching profession by teachers in partnership with the Alberta School Trustees Association and the Department of Education;

2. To set forward clear lines of responsibilities and action in matters dealing with professional standards (competence and ethics, certification and de-certification), policy and planning (professional development standards, priorities and preservice), and professional development (specialist councils, inservice, conference and publications).

Proposed Conceptual Model for the Teaching Profession

Revison Aug. 28



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The key provision is the creation of a Board of Teacher Standards, the total composition of which would be fifteen composed as follows:

- eight appointees by the Provincial Executive Council of the ATA
- five appointees by the Minister of Education, two of whom must be individuals involved in teacher training, one of whom must be a Department of Education official, and two of whom must be representatives of the public at large.
- two appointees by the Alberta School Trustees' Association

The following are recommended specifics relating to the operation of the Board of Teacher Standards:

1. the Board of Teacher Standards would operate autonomously in offices independent of the ATA, with its own staffing;

2. the costs attributable to the Board of Teacher Standards would be paid 8/15 by the ATA, 5/15 by the Government of the Province of Alberta and 2/15 by the Alberta School Trustees' Association;

3. the majority vote of the members of the Board of Teacher Standards would be sufficient in all decisions;

4. the Chairman of the Board of Teacher Standards would rotate on a yearly basis, from an ATA appointee to one of the other seven appointees;

5. the Board of Teacher Standards would prepare its operating regulations setting forth the manner by which it would operate on a day-to-day basis. These regulations would receive the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council;

6. an appeal tribunal would be set up by the Board of Teacher Standards, of appointees who have not heard a complaint in first instance. The composition of the appeal tribunal would be made up of an equal number of ATA members to non-ATA members;

7. a member of the ATA appearing before the Board of Teacher Standards or the appeal tribunal could not be represented by legal counsel appointed by the ATA;

8. any teacher, parent, school trustee or superintendent may, in confidentiality, in writing, submit a complaint to the Board of Teacher Standards, who will be charged to investigate or refer the matter to the proper authorities, such as the school principal, superintendent or school board involved.

9. two non-ATA members would be appointed by the Board of Teacher Standards to sit on the Provincial Executive Council.

10. the Board of Teacher Standards would act in an advisory capacity to the Minister of Education in matters relating to its functions in the areas of policies and planning and professional standards.

11. the Board of Teacher Standards would develop policies relating to the necessary preservice training, requisite certification standards required for the maintenance of certification as a teacher in the Province of Alberta.

The New Model and its Implications In Light of the Keegstra Affair

If this proposed model had been in place at the time of the disclosure of the teachings by Mr. Keegstra in Eckville, the following process would have been available:

1. A teacher, parent, school trustee or superintendent could have, in confidence, reported the situation directly to the Board of Teacher Standards.

2. The Board, upon receiving the confidential complaint, in writing, would have been obliged to investigate the circumstances and if deemed appropriate, call a hearing. Mr. Keegstra would have been permitted to appear before the Board of Teacher Standards, with counsel (not appointed or paid for by the ATA) to state his case.

3. The Board of Teacher Standards could, following the hearing, do nothing, discipline Mr. Keegstra, or de-certify him.

4. Mr. Keegstra would then have had an opportunity to appeal the ruling of the Board to an appeal tribunal set up by regulation to hear such matters.

One of the difficulties that became obvious to the members of the Committee arising from the Keegstra affair was the built-in intimidation within the system, faced by parents. Some parents, who found the teachings of Mr. Keegstra to be unacceptable, felt that there was no place they could go to complain considering the collegiality of the system, the position of the teacher in a small community and their parental concerns over the welfare of their children with respect to grades and fear of retribution.

It will also be important for the new system to function promptly. Tight timeframes must be incorporated into the regulations of the Board of Teacher Standards to ensure that complaints are dealt with quickly but always with recognition of the importance of fairness and impartiality.

Nothing contained in these recommendations will alter the obligations of local school boards to hire, evaluate, transfer and if necessary dismiss teachers in their jurisdictions.

The Board of Reference set up in the School Act would continue to act as final arbiter in matters relating to the dismissal of teachers by local school jurisdictions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In recognition that tolerance and understanding can only be fostered within the public eduction system if the appropriate structure is in place to ensure responsibility and accountability, it is recommended:

1. That the Minister of Education place an immediate priority on legislation that would ensure that teachers enjoy full professional status in Alberta, including the right to self-governance.

2. That the ATA and ASTA place immediate priority on reaching consensus with the Minister of Education in respect of the specific provisions of such legislation to be contained in a new Teaching Profession Act.

3. That the Minister of Education convene an open public conference with representatives of the ATA and the ASTA in order to reach an acceptable consensus for a new Teaching Profession Act.

4. That the Minister of Education place on the agenda the conceptual model contained in this discussion paper for the purposes of initiating discussion and providing the basis for further debate.

Principle 1

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

> "Alberta is an open democratic society. One of the pillars of our strength is our commitment to permit and to encourage, if needed, the development of the diverse cultures, religions and philosophies that we embody into a vibrant, energetic and respectful society. In an open democracy, choices must not be denied by government edict unless they run clearly contrary to the overall public harmony."

By opening its doors to all children, irrespective of color, race, religion, ethnic background, disability, social or economic position, the public education system provides the opportunity for the enhancement of tolerance and understanding and the development of an open democratic society.

In order to meet the opportunity which is presented to us in such a society, we must continually ensure that public education provides the maximum number of reasonable choices to children and parents. If the public education system does not adequately provide the choices demanded by parents for their children, the result will be a lost opportunity for the public education system to assist in the development and understanding of the diverse cultures, religions and philosophies embodied in our Canadian society. The result will also be seen in a dropping esteem by the public of the public education system and the ultimate losers will be our children and the Province as a whole.

In response to new demands, public educators have developed an array of programs: Early Childhood Service, special programs for gifted children, the growth of services in special education, minority language programs, English as a Second Language programs, French immersion, individualized programs, multicultural awareness programs, community schools, alternative schools, Education Opportunity Fund programs and innovative Native education programs. All of these commendable initiatives show how diverse the system has become and how flexible it can be.

The major criticisms of the programs in the public education system suggest that the programs do not adequately respond to the students' individual needs, do not achieve excellence and are not sufficiently value-oriented.

Clearly the programs provided by the public education system must meet the criteria of excellence. The Committee's use of the term "excellence" means achievement to the extent of each child's personal potential. There must be excellence in the academic programs, excellence in the human development programs, and excellence in the programs designed for children of special needs.

Public education will not meet the aspirations of all parents. As a result, there will always be a place for privately initiated alternative schools to fulfill the aspirations of parents who wish special orientation for their children in religion, language, culture, or special education. This is appropriate so long as minimum educational standards are achieved and so long as the parents are willing to pay the extra costs attributable to the perceived special benefits they receive for their children.

In addition, it is clear that for those parents who wish schools to provide religious courses (other than in the Catholic system where it already exists), either in the precepts of a particular faith or in the broader context of comparative religious studies, there must be optional opportunities available, where the numbers warrant and facilities are available.

Preparing our children for participation in our open democracy is an especially demanding task and the role of education is critical.

> "Democracy, education and tolerance and understanding are inextricably intertwined in our society. In the same way that an educated citizenry is necessary for the functioning of a democratic society, so too is tolerance and respect for all individuals essential for the proper functioning of both the educational system and our democratic society."
>
> Edmonton Public School Board

Schools provide the longest and most intensive exposure that most people ever have to a public institution, first as students and later as parents. Schools cannot help but have an impact on peoples' attitudes and expectancies towards democratic principles. If we fail to reinforce these principles, if we take too narrow a view of the process and purpose of education, we stand to lose the openness, diversity, and creativity that are so essential to our democratic institutions as a whole.

Just as education and democracy are inseparable, the process of learning about people is inseparable from tolerance and understanding.

> "The conscious promotion of tolerance and understanding about people and cultures is a fundamental on-going fact of life for all who are involved in education."
>
> Calgary Board of Education

Within the diversity of the clientele that enters the public schoolroom is the opportunity to provide a powerful and constructive learning experience that will carry over into the rest of society.

> "Our student body represents in excess of two dozen different cultural linguistic and racial origins... I consider our work in preparing immigrants to enter Canadian society as vital to the social health and future of Canada."
>
> Rolf R. Pritchard, English as Second Language Program, Edmonton Public Schools

Throughout our inquiry, we have been struck by the fact that the principles and perspectives to meet the challenge of developing a tolerant, understanding and respectful society have been discovered and rediscovered every time people seriously reflect on the issues. Excellent and thoughtful statements can be found at all levels of education in the Province of Alberta which are statements of philosophy, ethics and policy, and which clearly signify the commitment of the Government of Alberta, the School Trustees, teachers and local school boards, to

the values and directions that act as the pillars for an educational system based philosophically on the concepts of tolerance, understanding and the creation of a respectful society.

In 1978, the Legislature of the Province of Alberta, in full debate, approved goals of schooling and goals of education. It is significant that within these goals can be found many statements that bear directly on tolerance and understanding, such as:

- Acquire knowledge and develop skills, attitudes and habits which contribute to physical, mental, and society well-being.
- Develop an understanding of the meaning, responsibilities, and benefits of active citizenship at the local, national and international levels.
- Intellectual curiosity and a desire for lifelong learning.
- the ability to get along with people of varying backgrounds, beliefs and lifestyles without sacrificing personal ideals and values.
- a sense of community responsibility which embraces respect for law and authority, public and private property, and the rights of others.
- self-discipline, self-understanding, and a positive self-concept through realistic appraisal of one's capabilities and limitations.
- a sense of purpose in life and ethical or spiritual values which respect the worth of the individual, justice, fair play, and fundamental rights, responsibilities and freedoms.

The significance of these stated goals by the Legislature are often overlooked. The Committee, on the following page, has included these goals in this discussion paper as a reminder of the commitment of the Province of Alberta, in an explicit way, to the enhancement of tolerance and understanding in our educational system.

The depth and quality of the debate, as reported in Hansard, that took place in the Alberta Legislature, also stands as a significant statement by the legislators of the Province of Alberta as to their commitment to the goals of education and, implicitly, to the encouragement of tolerance and understanding.

I. THE GOALS OF BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALBERTA

Goals are statements which indicate what is to be achieved or worked toward. In relation to basic education, goals serve several functions:

(1) They identify the distinctive role of the school and its contribution to the total education of youth;
(2) They provide purpose and direction to curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation;
(3) They enable parents, teachers and the community at large to develop a common understanding of what the schools are trying to achieve.

Society must periodically re-examine the goals of its schools. Changes in emphasis and minor adjustment of the basic goals may be required from time to time to keep pace with social change.

This statement of goals is to direct education for grades 1 through 12 in Alberta schools. It is the basis from which specific objectives for various subjects and grades shall be developed.

While the school makes a very important contribution to education, it is only one of the agencies involved in the education of youth. The home, the church, the media and community organizations are very significant influences on children. It is useful, therefore, to delimit the role of schooling in education. Education refers to all the learning experiences the individual has in interacting with the physical and social environment; it is a continuing and lifelong process. Schooling, which has a more limited purpose, refers to the learning activities planned and conducted by a formally structured agency which influences individuals during a specified period. There is, of course, a very close relationship between schooling and education — the learning which occurs in school influences and is influenced by what is learned outside the school.

GOALS OF SCHOOLING

Schooling, as part of education, accepts primary and distinctive responsibility for specific goals basic to the broader goals of education. Programs and activities shall be planned, taught, and evaluated on the basis of these specific goals in order that students will be provided with the opportunities and means to:

— Develop competencies in reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.
— Acquire basic knowledge and develop skills and attitudes suitable for the appropriate application of knowledge in mathematics, the practical and fine arts, the sciences, and the social studies (including history and geography), with appropriate local, national, and international emphases in each.
— Develop the learning skills of finding, organizing, analyzing, and applying information in a constructive and objective manner.
— Acquire knowledge and develop skills, attitudes and habits which contribute to physical, mental, and social well-being.
— Develop an understanding of the meaning, responsibilities, and benefits of active citizenship at the local, national and international levels.
— Acquire knowledge and develop skills, attitudes, and habits required to respond to the opportunities and expectations of the world of work.

Because the above goals are highly interrelated, each complementing and reinforcing the others, priority ranking among them is not suggested. It is recognized that in sequencing learning activities for students some goals are emphasized earlier than others; however, in relation to the total years of schooling, they are of equal importance.

In working toward the attainment of its goals, the school will strive for excellence. However, the degree of individual achievement also depends on student capabilities and motivation as well as on support from the home and the community. Completion of diploma requirements is expected to provide the graduate with basic preparation for lifelong learning. Dependent on program choices, the diploma also enables job entry or further formal study.

GOALS OF EDUCATION

Achievement of the broader goals of education must be viewed as a shared responsibility of the community. Maximum learning occurs when the efforts and expectations of various institutions affecting children complement each other. Recognizing the learning that has or has not occurred through various community influences, among which the home is most important, the school will encourage the development of:

— intellectual curiosity and a desire for lifelong learning.
— the ability to get along with people of varying backgrounds, beliefs and lifestyles without sacrificing personal ideals and values.
— a sense of community responsibility which embraces respect for law and authority, public and private property, and the rights of others.
— self-discipline, self-understanding, and a positive self-concept through realistic appraisal of one's capabilities and limitations.
— an appreciation for tradition and the ability to understand and respond constructively to change as it occurs in personal life and in society.
— skills for effective utilization of financial resources and leisure time and for constructive involvement in community endeavors.
— an appreciation for the role of the family in society.
— an interest in cultural and recreational pursuits.
— a commitment to the careful use of natural resources and to the preservation and improvement of the physical environment.
— a sense of purpose in life and ethical or spiritual values which respect the worth of the individual, justice, fair play, and fundamental rights, responsibilities and freedoms.

The ultimate aim of education is to develop the abilities of the individual in order to fulfill personal aspirations while making a positive contribution to society.

A sampling of these statements follows:

"For some years now I have been concerned at the absence of well-understood, well-accepted goals of education for our basic education system in this province. I think it has been an overdue matter for this Legislative Assembly to come to grips with this question. Frankly, at times I have felt apprehensive at the danger of not having such goals, which leaves it beyond the scope of the public policy of this Legislature, to the conclusions or diverse aspirations of the education establishment in the province, effective and dedicated as they are, to determine on an ad hoc basis what should be the basic course content and curriculum development of our education system. It strikes me that it is clearly a rudderless situation for one of the very important jurisdictions of a provincial legislature, the area of education and public policy in education."

Premier Lougheed

"We know the ultimate aim of education, as set out in the Sessional paper referred to in this Resolution. That ultimate aim is to develop the abilities of the individual in order that he might fulfill his personal aspirations while making a positive contribution to society. So, for an individual, education is extremely important in this day and age. But for society as a whole it is most important that its citizens be educated. As a matter of fact, I quite honestly feel that a democratic society cannot possibly exist with an illiterate public. To continue with the way of life we have here, with a democratic society, we must ensure a literate membership of that society. For this reason, I underline the significance of this particular debate in the proceedings we are taking this afternoon."

The Honourable Mr. Koziak, Minister of Education

"One of the things we should strive to achieve in our education system is to liberate and to develop to the fullest extent the creative potential of all individuals while cherishing and showing respect for diversity....The goal of our system is to create the truly educated person who is able to reach that individual's maximum potential and develop interests accordingly as long as that individual, as I say, stays within the restraints of showing respect for diversity and recognizing the rights of other people."

Mr. Notley, MLA

"Learning to be a good citizen is very important. I believe this is one of the most important goals of all. A good citizen naturally takes an active interest in community and government affairs; respects others' property, religion, language and cultural heritage; and recognizes his roles and responsibilities to his community, province and country. Through good citizenship you would realize some of the other goals, such as planning, learning about and trying to understand the changes that take place in the world, and learning to respect and get along with people of varying beliefs and lifestyles. All these things are important to a society that hopes to live in harmony."

Mr. Batiuk, MLA

"We have the public system, which consists of the public and catholic systems, but we have the independent schools which are a very competitive, viable force in this Province. They are a constant challenge to the people in the public education system, because they are doing a very effective job."

Mr. Diachuk, MLA

"In Alberta, Mr. Speaker, we have had a history of re-evaluating our goals of education, although I believe this is the first time it's ever been done in the Legislature. I think that it's important that we do reassess our goals and objectives in this type of setting and that we continue to do this in the future. We need to have a clear statement of goals in order to emphasize what is to be done by our schools and secondly to establish directions as to how education is to be accomplished."

Dr. Webber, MLA

Explicit statements of philosophy, common goals and policy are vital if our educational system is to achieve a focus so that the pressure of day to day operations do not obscure and override the very reasons for the organization's existence.

Clear statements of philosophy from the major stakeholders in public education are essential. In our travels throughout Alberta we heard many worthy statements of philosophy from school authorities, which explicitly stated the philosophy of a particular school division.

> "While no single institution can guarantee a bright and fruitful childhood for every child, we believe it morally incumbent upon our schools - in cooperation with parents - to do everything within their legitimate means and power to guide each student toward constructive self-fulfillment and responsible citizenship, with due respect for his individual way of getting there."
>
> Excerpt from Pincher Creek School Division
> Statement of Philosophy

> "Education is to a great extent the drawing of the student's attention to his environment, learning to classify the tremendous volume of known facts in order to have a sound basis for further learning; developing accurate generalizations regarding natural phenomena; acquiring ability to reason, to solve problems, to apply knowledge; but most important to develop the ability to adapt to change."
>
> Excerpt from Fort McMurray School Division
> Statement of Philosophy

Many school boards, in their statements of philosophy, express excellent policies relating to the enhancement of tolerance and understanding within their jurisdictions, such as:

> "- provide materials on opposing sides on controversial issues so that, under guidance, young citizens may develop the practice of critical analysis of all media
>
> - provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contributions to our national heritage and world community

- place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality, in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate to the school community

- the Board is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in relation to race, colour, sex, age, marital status, handicap or national origin. The policy will prevail on all matters concerning staff, students and educational programs and services"

Calgary Catholic Board of Education

At times it is difficult to translate philosophy into practice; however, the process of expressing the philosophy is essential and stands as recognition of the intent and purpose of education by the school authorities.

"Defining goals and pursuing them is essential. The process demands careful thought, commitment, dedication, resources and energy."

K.A. Jesse, Superintendent
Red Deer Public Schools

"It is the school's function to build on the strengths that a child brings with him. If, at age six, he has already through home influence cultivated fairly sophisticated insights into numbers and reasonable skill in using numbers, it is the school's duty to build upon that knowledge immediately and to expand that competence, not to ignore it. If a child brings to school an unusual curiosity for things of his environment, the school must extend that curiosity and channel it into productive avenues of further learning, not stifle it. For it is on strength that one builds, and because children come to school with varying strengths, no teacher should expect a class to move fo ward on an unbroken front of learning. Differential growth is the cornerstone of good learning in school, and the school must gear itself to this end."

Lloydminster Public School District

During the past year, the Committee has been advised of a new recognition by some school authorities as to the importance of the explicit statements of their philosopies. As a result new statements of philosophy have been prepared by some school jurisdictions in the province which explicitly reaffirm the undertaking of the particular school jurisdiction to create programs that will enhance tolerance and understanding within their school jurisdiction.

In the same way that philosophy is essential in creating a picture of what education should become, ethics are essential in creating a picture of the standards and priorities of those who educate.

The Alberta School Trustees Association has a code of ethics, which reflects directly on the subject of tolerance and understanding, such as:

> "Trustees are the childrens' advocates, and my first and greatest concern is the best interest of each and every one of these children without distinction as to who they are or what their background may be."
>
> "That Trustees are educational leaders who realize that the future welfare of the community, the Province and of Canada depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education we provide in the public schools to fit the needs of every learner."
>
> "Have a moral and civic obligation to the Nation which can remain strong and free only so long as public schools in Canada are kept free and strong."

Each Board in Alberta should re-examine its code of ethics to ensure that the conduct of each individual School Trustee is clearly defined and understood. If a school board does not have a code of ethics, it should prepare one immediately.

Within our education system, the teacher is the primary practitioner of education, and the quality of the whole system rests on the professional skills and orientation of the teachers.

In keeping with our principle that each child's learning should be the explicit and primary focus of the philosophy of education, we also believe that this focus should be explicitly stated in the ethical code of teachers. Teachers' priorities should be clearly enunciated in their code of ethics.

Attached on the following page is the code of ethics of the Alberta Teachers' Association. To their credit, the ATA in 1984 amended the attached code of ethics in recognition of the importance of enhancing tolerance and understanding within the school system, with the following statement:

> "The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age, ancestry and place of origin."

Unfortunately, the code of ethics of the ATA, rather than highlighting the teacher's responsibility to the child, seems to place priority on the preservation of the collegial aspects of the ATA's responsibilities. Further reference will be made to the code of ethics of the ATA in the section dealing with Principle #3 in this discussion paper, entitled "Right of the Child".

The problem then is not that we do not know what we should be doing. The problem is that our knowledge of what we should be doing often is not translated into action.

We have not been as successful as we should be in creating responsive and capable institutions that are able to link the stated ideals, philosophies, policies and ethics into practice. It is immensely important that steps be taken to create this linkage. Firstly, there must be frequent communication and reaffirmation of the basic principles of the major stakeholders. The strength and continuation of our democratic society is based upon our commitment to our educational system within the context of the philosophies, ethics and policy statements of our major stakeholder groups.

CODE OF ETHICS

The Code of Ethics shall apply to all members, and the term "teacher" as used in this code includes all members of The Alberta Teachers' Association. A complaint of violation of this code made to the Association by any person or group shall be regarded by the Provincial Executive Council of the Association as a charge of unprofessional conduct under the Discipline Bylaws of the Association. Excessive or flagrant violation of the Standards of Professional Conduct by any member of the Association may also lead to discipline charges being laid against that member.

1. The teacher does not criticize the professional competence or professional reputation of a colleague except to proper officials and then only in confidence and after the colleague has been informed of the criticism.

2. The teacher recognizes the Association as the official spokesman of the teachers in Alberta. Individuals or groups purporting to speak on behalf of teachers to the officials of colleges, institutions or universities, or to the government, its members or officials, on matters affecting the interests of teachers generally, do so only with the prior consent of the Provincial Executive Council.

3. The teacher provides documents relevant to engagement or advancement requested by the employer.

4. The teacher adheres to collective agreements negotiated by the Association.

5. The teacher fulfills contractual obligations with an employer until released by mutual consent or according to law.

6. The teacher does not apply for nor accept a colleague's position before it has been declared vacant.

7. The teacher does not divulge information received in confidence or in the course of professional duties, except as required by law, or where, in the judgment of the teacher, it is in the best interests of the child.

8. The teacher does not accept pay for tutoring his own pupils in the subjects in which he gives classroom instruction.

9. The teacher does not use his professional position for personal profit by offering goods or services to his own pupils or their parents.

We must learn to build upon these philosophies within the wide scope of our diversities, so that a full appreciation can be developed in the minds of our children of the richness of our democratic way of life and the significance of the freedoms that we enjoy in our open democratic society.

Confidence in the public education system in this province will diminish if the diversity and flexibility demanded by parents within the context of excellence is not provided by the system.

The responsibility of public education is **awesome.**

Because public education has to be so many things to so many different people, it is easy to criticize and demean when it seems to be doing less than a perfect job. No other institution in our society is faced with such a complex, demanding, and vital task.

> "Monolithic school systems reflect majority values, and bureaucractic rules and regulations prevent innovation. Large schools operate most smoothly with standardized procedures. Large classes militate against individual teaching, class discussion and essay-type assignments, and in favour of worksheets and tests have 'one right answer"...(Our system) has been obsessed with conformity and equated sameness with fairness. Our conformist educational system makes it difficult to achieve curriculum objectives like critical thinking, respect for the views of others, and independent responsible action. Independent thought and action by students are acceptable only if they coincide with what the adults have already decided... Most students conclude that conformity is best. Students who are unavoidably different in their abilities, behavior, or appearance may have a rough time. There is no way they can play safe by conforming."
>
> Margaret Fitch, Parent and Teacher

Our response to the shortcomings in education must be constructive. The health and vitality of our education system, especially through these years of rapid change, is the foundation of our future.

We believe that the best way to achieve tolerance and understanding in our society is to have a strong educational system that is stimulating, creative, and effective; an education system that prepares individuals for life in an open democracy, an education system that is constantly checking its performance against its ideals, an education systems that knows what is at stake and how much our society depends on it.

CONCLUSIONS

Our public education system is committed philosophically to encourage and facilitate the pursuit of excellence and truth by students, teachers and administrators by means of curriculum and attitudes reflecting the values of tolerance, rational thinking, freedom, esteem of self and others, independence, originality and honesty. The challenge is to translate these stated ideals into practice.

Public education must provide the maximum number of reasonable programs to the children of Alberta in order to meet the diversity of aspirations of parents. These programs must strive for excellence and be based on the ideals that are explicitly expressed by the Legislature of the Province of Alberta, the ATA, the ASTA and the local school jurisdictions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That in respect to the Government of Alberta's initiative to establish Goals of Education and Schooling, a formal review mechanism be put into place to ensure that their relevancy and purpose remain current and that they are ratified by each session of the Legislative Assembly.

2. That the Department of Education require from each school jurisdiction a written statement of philosophy and code of ethics to be reviewed and ratified by each Board of Trustees upon election to office.

3. That the Department of Education put on permanent display in every school in the province the statement of the Goals of Education and the Goals of Schooling in the Province of Alberta.

4. In recognition of the fact that public education will not meet the aspirations of all parents, it is recommended that privately initiated alternative schools be eligible for public funding if the following criteria are met:

- use of certified teachers
- use of approved curriculum
- affiliation with a local school jurisdiction
- assumption of all costs over and above the 75% per student costs presently granted by Alberta Education

Principle #2

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

> "It is the obligation of parents to ensure the best possible education for their children."

Public education is a partnership between parent and school.

The public education system must have the respect of the parent, if the parent is to enter a child into the system with a feeling of trust and confidence.

Parents must perceive that the public education system will provide their child with excellent academic and personal development opportunities under the guidance of a qualified and dedicated teaching profession.

But parents have obligations as well, to become involved in their child's school activities, and to assist the child in the home environment.

It cannot be a one-sided partnership.

> "Schools do not replace parents. They may compensate for the inadequate parent; but they can never fully take the place of a good parent. Character and personality, personal habits and attitudes, social behaviour and moral insight, are cultivated and instilled primarily by parents."
>
> Lloydminster Public School Board

> "The Board believes that community participation in the affairs of the schools is essential if the school system and the community are to maintain mutual confidence and respect and work together to improve the quality of education for students."
>
> Calgary Catholic Board of Education

Although the partnership nature of education is widely acknowledged in principle, the degree to which school systems are open to parental and community involvement is another matter.

There is often a wide gap between principles and performance, and in many cases neither the parents nor the school administrators appear to know what the ground rules for cooperation really are.

We have heard from many parents who felt intimidated by the system, who felt that they were intruders rather than partners in the educational process.

> "There can be little doubt that there has been considerable loss of parental involvement and influence in education since the days of the little red schoolhouse. Some of it was inevitable, and even necessary. A great deal of it was caused by sheer neglect and apathy on the part of the parents. A much more recent cause is that the educational bureaucracy has become too large and powerful. Some parents are finding that when they do make an effort to get involved, they end up in a power struggle with the school either because of a genuine resistance on the part of the school officials, or because of misinterpretation of the parents' actions or motives."
>
> Alberta Federation of Women United for Families

There is a danger in any large organization that institutional guidelines and priorities geared to the efficient handling of the majority tend to override variations in needs among the total client population, and may even be put out of step with what the "clients" really want.

The system must be "user-friendly". The public school system must avoid a tendency towards overall efficiency if the result is discouraging parents from involvement in the school system.

> "We believe there needs to be a positive attitude toward education, to achieve this parents need to have their concerns listened to and acted upon when necessary.

There are many excellent things happening in our schools and classrooms, we have some of the best teachers at our children's disposal."

Diana Almberg - Vice President,
Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations

One of the most effective ways of achieving cooperation between home and school, and at the same time bringing together diverse groups from within the community, is to formally make the community a partner in education, as is done in the Community School program.

"Mallaig Community School was designated the Community school status a year ago. We are pleased at this designation since the very nature of the term community implies a spirit of cooperation, understanding and tolerance...For example, the characteristics of the community related curriculum enhances the opportunitites to open our classroom doors to a variety of community members to share with our young people not only their expertise but also a wealth of ideas and philosophies of their understanding of man, life and environment. Recently the characteristic of cooperation and collegiality were activated by the formation of a courtesy committee. This committee is comprised of parents, teachers and students and has as an objective the creation of a school environment which engenders mutual respect, not only within our school walls but beyond and especially to some surrounding communities which have a large native population."

R.A. Boutin
Ecole Mallaig Community School,
County of St. Paul

While there is a diversity of orientations within the Community School approach, there are common elements to those that actually promote the type of educational cooperation and partnership that we feel is vital to achieve, the expectations of these schools being:

- parents are viewed as full partners in education
- parents are made to feel welcome anytime and are given significant tasks to do if they are interested in becoming involved.
- the school has a community council that sets school policies and priorities
- well-developed lines of communication between home, school and community
- there is a clear statement of what the school is about and how to get involved
- the use of community resources by teachers in their program of studies.

Another example is Early Childhood Services, which expressed the following goals with respect to parental involvement:

- The dignity and worth of the family must be respected and enhanced.
- The family, in its various forms, is a fundamental and important unit in society. Its function in meeting the developmental and special needs of children must be recognized and supported.
- Effective programs require the commitment of parents and other individuals.
- Parents have the right and responsibility to be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of programs for their children and themselves.
- Staff with different backgrounds of training may be required to meet the various needs of young children and parents.
- Because individuals, families and communities are unique culturally, economically and geographically, programs should be flexible and responsive to needs.
- A comprehensive, co-ordinated team approach to the delivery of services is desirable in order to meet the needs of children, parents, staff and community.

Philosophy, Goals and Program Dimensions
Alberta Education, Early Childhood Services, 1984

We believe that every school in this province should have such an orientation toward education and the community, and that ways and means must be found to facilitate this development.

Rapid changes in our society are creating uncertainty about what the future will bring and what education should be. In this environment it is imperative to involve parents in discussions about priorities, methods and directions. A variety of laudable efforts are being made to do this. The Edmonton Public Board uses a student/parent/staff attitude survey to gauge responsiveness to needs. Calgary Catholic Schools endorse school councils as a means of involving parents, and 94% of their schools have such councils. These and similar efforts should be encouraged and extended.

We feel that the parental involvement in education is more than a right, it is an obligation. To be involved parents must be informed, and school jurisdictions must do a good job of communicating with the public about basic issues. Parents must also accept some responsibility for what the public education system becomes. The governance and accountability of education is achieved through both local and provincial elections. It is in the fullest sense a "public" system and whether or not it is responsive to public needs will depend on the quality and extent of public involvement.

Parents sometimes appear to be only too happy to turn their children over to the school as a kind of child-care service. To be sure, modern pressures and lifestyle have made it difficult for many parents to be actively involved in their childrens' education, but they must realize that the schools cannot do it all alone. Even if parents cannot find the time or the appropriate means to be involved in school programs, they must be involved in the child's education.

> "The first time I sent my oldest child to school I made a promise to this and every following child. I promised I would not allow the school to usurp my responsibility as a parent. I will watch and try to ensure he retains his love for himself and others. I will be a guardian preventing him from losing his uniqueness. I will praise his individuality, his love of exploration, his desire to be different and his tolerance for the uniqueness of others."
>
> A. Battig, Parent

CONCLUSIONS:

The obligation of parents to ensure the best possible education for their children is the cornerstone of policies relating to openness and parental involvement in schools. There are many examples of positive results flowing from parental involvement, leading to the conclusion that a working partnership between the home and school is a prerequisite for the development of a tolerant and understanding society.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That every school board should formulate, implement and communicate a policy designed to foster parental involvement with the schools. This policy should increase awareness and understanding of:

   - parental rights and responsibilities
   - details of the administrative structure including the responsibilities and duties of school trustees, superintendents and principals in the school jurisdiction
   - role of the Department of Education in terms of support services and curriculum development
   - policies and procedures relative to reporting parental concerns
   - ways in which parents can become involved in the activities of the school

2. That every school jurisdiction should require that each school prepare a written philosophy in consultation with students, parents and/or guardians and community representatives. Subject to annual ratification the school philosophy would include:

   - identification of opportunities for parents and/or guardians, grandparents, ethnic and cultural groups, special needs associations and other community resource groups to become part of a resource base for the local school

- establishment of a mechanism in each school by which any or all of the above groups can volunteer their services
- preparation and implementation of a code of behaviour as agreed upon by representatives from the students, teachers and parents or guardians.

3. That the Department of Education compile a catalogue of all existing policies, procedures and programs that have been put in practice by local school jurisdictions to encourage parental involvement and that the catalogue be distributed to all school jurisdictions for resource purposes.

Principle #3

RIGHT OF THE CHILD

> "It is the duty of society to provide maximum educational opportunities for its children and it is the right of the child to receive an education of no less than minimum acceptable standards."

Philosophy and Focus

The child is paramount in the educational system. In order to provide excellent education for our children, it is vital that teachers' priorities be clearly enunciated and that teachers possess the highest professional standards and competency.

The enunciation of the teachers' priorities can be seen in their code of ethics.

The code of ethics of the ATA, seen on page 27A of this discussion paper, rather than highlighting the teacher's responsibility to the child, places priority on the preservation of the collegial aspects of the ATA's responsibilities. The child is not referred to until the seventh statement within the code of ethics, and even there the ultimate responsibility of the teacher to the child is not recognized. The standards of professional conduct of the ATA express only three limited references relating to the teacher's relation to pupils.

The first statement in the code of ethics of the ATA has been frequently criticized at the Committee's public hearings, and seems to attract frequent criticism of our teachers. The section reads:

> "The teacher does not criticize the professional competence or professional reputation of a colleague, except to proper officials and then only in confidence and after the colleague has been informed of the criticism."

Representatives of the ATA, in explaining this statement in the code of ethics, assert that it is merely an expression of civility and good manners. To others, however, the statement is perceived to be a shield for those teachers who may be lacking in competence or performance.

The Committee is of the view that the present code of ethics and standards of professional conduct of the ATA must be strengthened if they are to meet professional standards with respect to the teacher's relationship with his or her clientele. Clearly there are a number of standards of conduct for teachers which should be incorporated within a detailed code of ethics that are pervasive to the whole teaching and learning process. These should include consideration of the following suggestions:

An ethical teacher:

- Places the child's learning and well-being above all else
- Is committed to learning however and wherever it occurs
- Cooperates with others, professional and non-professional, who are nurturing the child's growth and builds on all learning
- Is tolerant of the difficulties of the learning process and is patient with the child's lack of understanding
- Understands the inevitability of error and uses it as an instrument of teaching
- Has confidence and respect for the child's ultimate ability to learn.
- Encourages the child and imparts hope
- Understands the value of human diversity and the many paths to learning
- Is committed to the value of truth and to the best available methods for finding and testing it
- Instills a sense of self-esteem in the student
- Develops in a student critical thinking skills characterized by values based on openness, enquiry, imagination, original ideas, dissent, rational thinking, creativity and independent thinking

- Instills in the student the appreciation of our democratic traditions, symbolized by an attitude of tolerance, understanding and respect for others, no matter what his/her origins and values may be
- Instills in his/her students an attitude of creative citizenship characterized by a sense of responsibility that must flow back from each citizen of the society in which he lives
- Commences corrective action against another teacher who is not abiding by the code of ethics or standards of professional conduct

Had these statements been incorporated into the code of ethics of the ATA at the time of the Keegstra affair, it is conceivable that incident would have been resolved in a more expeditious manner.

RECOMMENDATION

That the ATA review its code of ethics and standards of professional conduct and make revisions which will identify the teacher's responsibility to the child as a teacher's highest priority.

Exceptional Children

Each child is unique, and when considering each student's needs in respect to educational opportunities, the Committee's attention was drawn to the needs of children who are notably "exceptional"; in other words, those children whose unique learning needs qualify them for special education programs.

Exceptional children may be mentally, emotionally or physically disabled, learning disabled or gifted. Each group faces barriers to ensuring access to maximum educational opportunities, which include society's expectations,

> "Gifted children are the 'other minority'. Like members of all minority groups, they may experience problems related to poor self-concepts, social isolation, alientation and uncertainty concerning their roles in society. And like other minorities, they are under pressure to act out the stereotypes created for them by society."
>
> Action for Bright Children

lack of understanding,

> "Psychological studies have proven there is a definite relationship between historical myths, prejudice, discrimination, and our lack of knowledge with attitudes shown to the disabled by the "non-disabled" today. For both visible and invisible disabilities, these attitudes can hinder and destroy an individual's ability to fulfill individual potentials."
>
> Alberta Committee of Consumer Groups for the Disabled

and the lack of a school environment that gives them instructional support and motivation:

> "Often, learning disabled children are referred to as "slow learners", "lazy", or "immature" when in fact they have average to superior intelligence and can learn. This is

further compounded by the teasing from their peers they sometimes receive. They lose their self-concept and self-esteem and become frustrated and anxious and quite often this develops into anti-social and even delinquent behaviour."

Jan Foster, Trustee
Lethbridge School District #51

The Province of Alberta has undertaken many leadership initiatives in this area.

The Department of Education, through its policies, programs and support personnel has motivated many school jurisdictions to take on the challenge of meeting the needs of exceptional children, instead of relying on institutions, outside agencies or, ultimately, the parent, to carry the responsibility for their child's education.

The growth of special education programs in Alberta has been explosive. In 1969-70 there were 4,921 students and 526 teachers in such programs. In 1983-84 there were 30,408 students and 1,959 teachers. The increase is not just due to increases in population alone. With increasing funding and expertise, the educators are helping exceptional children with identification, diagnosis and placement at an earlier age, when the potential for success is much greater. Over the last fifteen years the Department of Education built a support base that gave special education long-overdue recognition and support that included:

- Special Education Teaching Positions;
- Special Education Services Branch
- Learning Disabilities Fund
- Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired
- Development of Curriculum for the Educably Mentally Disabled, Learning Impaired, trainable mentally disabled, dependent handicapped and the visually impaired
- Program Unit Grant for Severely Handicapped Pupils
- Introduction of programs for the sensory multi-handicapped
- Task Force on Gifted and Talented

- Funding for Gifted and Talented Children
- Funding of Category II Private Schools
- Out or Province Placement
- Educational Opportunities Funding

In 1978-79 the budget for special education was $19.8 million. In 1983-84 the budget had increased to $58.2 million.

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding supports the Government of Alberta on the recently announced Management Finance Plan and its provision for Special Education Block Grants. It is significant in that the individual programs are now replaced with a new funding formula which provides a block grant based upon a specific amount for each resident student in grades one through twelve in every school jurisdiction. The features of the Plan that are of particular note to the Committee are:

- It emphasizes the responsibility that each school jurisdiction has for every resident child, regardless of ability;
- It increases the autonomy of local school boards;
- It provides school boards with more flexibility in the allocation of special education funds according to local community needs;
- It allows school boards to develop their own policies, procedures and programs, rather than simply administering special education grants.

The Committee has stated its conviction that school boards must accept responsibility for every child in its jurisdiction. Due to a reluctance on the part of school boards in the past to do just that, we have seen the growth of Category II schools. While many parents of exceptional children are being served ably and well by the public education system, there are those who prefer access to Category II schools or privately initiated alternatives inside and outside of the Province.

The Committee has endorsed the establishment of alternative schools based not only on religion, culture and philosophy, but on the educational needs of

exceptional children. Category II schools offer parents and school boards with viable alternatives for educating exceptional children, and government policy should recognize this fact.

Each school jurisdiction has responded to the needs of exceptional children in different ways.

Many parents had to battle for the right to have their child educated in their own community. In approaching local boards for assistance, the answers given were ones that parents have heard time and time again, in many parts of the province, when the subject of education for the mentally and physically disabled arises:

> "It's a great idea but funds prohibit such a program."
> "Mentally handicapped individuals are not priorities."
> "Mentally handicapped should be taken care of through medical services."
> "Are you sure of the need - how many are there?"
> "You may destroy our opportunity room program."
>
> As reported by Roberta Groff, Horizon School, Olds

Where the school system did not provide an education for disabled children, parents shouldered the responsibility to educate their children and fought to keep their children in their own homes and communities, rather than sending them to institutions.

> "It came through hard work, confidence that it would work, and individuals dedicated to make it work. This is an unusual community. People have opened their hearts to the needs of the handicapped and because of their generosity and understanding have provided opportunities for the mentally handicapped to have the finest education and training available in Canada today."
>
> Roberta Groff, Horizon School, Olds

There are many instances where the local school board took the initiative and accommodated all children resident in their jurisdiction.

> "For the past fifteen years that I have been a principal in Lethbridge Schools, there has always been a class of Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR) children at each of my schools. My philosophy has always been to encourage an integrated approach for these children."
>
> Gordon Lowe, Principal
> Lethbridge School District #51

The benefits of such an approach and philosophy extend beyond the self-esteem and educational needs of the disabled student but extend to all children. The children in the classroom gain an understanding and acceptance of the disabled children that will guide them as adults.

> "Our staff was generally positive about having handicapped children in regular classrooms. We felt that the self-concept of the handicapped student was usually improved. The understanding and tolerance of all other students was increased by having children with special needs in the same classroom. The appropriate modelling behaviour which was more socially acceptable would enhance social skills of some students."
>
> Lethbridge School District #51

Despite special education funding, the public education system is still struggling with meeting the needs of exceptional children.

It is unrealistic to expect the public education system to be the answer for every child. It is important that not only parents but the system itself recognize this fact so that the authorities have more empathy and understanding for those parents and children who feel they must use alternative schools.

> "The families who choose Foothills Academy do so out of need, out of frustration and anxiety over the intolerable situation in which their children had existed within the public systems where they were not understood, were not

adequately educated, and were not making social gain. Families arrive at Foothills doorstep out of frustration, not because of a perceived need to have their child "privately" educated. Often we are seen as the only alternative for Learning Disabled children."

Foothills Academy

The role of alternative schools in teaching exceptional children has a long history in Alberta, as support funding for private classes for trainable mentally disabled children has been available since the mid 1950's and the first private school for the learning disabled, Evelyn Unger School in Edmonton, was established in the mid 1960's.

This continuing growth and expansion of privately initiated schools clearly indicates there is a demand for such alternative schooling and we must respect the decisions of parents to remove their children from a public school.

"Our kids are finally having successes after many years of costly piecemeal/band-aid programs. Foothills' programs were initiated by parents and professionals whose level of frustration at the lack of appropriate educational opportunities for Severely Learning Disabled children was such that they had to take the step to segregate, label and uproot their children from their neighborhood schools and pay thousands of dollars over an average three year program for an appropriate education for their children. This is clearly a situation of "need" rather than of "choice".

Maureen C. Shaw
Parent

Conclusion

Education is a partnership between schools and parents to provide the best education for each child. The fundamental right of the parents to determine their child's education must be respected, regardless of whether the need identified by the parent is based on religion, culture, philosophy or the needs of an exceptional

child, so long as minimum educational standards are met, parents pay the additional costs, and the alternative schools are accountable to local school jurisdictions. The new Special Education Block Funding respects the parents' right to place a child in a privately initiated alternative school (Category II) and provides for negotiated tuition agreements between the local school board and the Category II school.

Recommendations

1. That the Department of Education, in implementing its Special Block Funding Plan recognize the fundamental principle that in respect to the placement of the child in a particular school, the responsibility is shared equally between the parent and the local school jurisdiction.

2. That the Department of Education specifically designate the amount of funding available to a privately initiated alternative Category II school for each child that qualifies.

3. That a local appeal mechanism be established to resolve disputes between parents and school jurisdictions regarding the placement of a child.

4. That the Department of Education establish diagnostic centres, in cooperation with the Faculties of Education at Calgary, Edmonton and Lethbridge. The diagnostic centres to provide:

   - the capability to diagnose children referred by local school boards
   - research centre to develop new technology and techniques
   - a centre for training teachers in diagnostic techniques

CURRICULUM AUDIT

One of the questions raised by the "Keegstra affair" related to the adequacy of the curriculum used in the public school system. How, many asked, could unacceptable material be utilized in the classroom without the obtaining of prior approval?

As a key component of the Government's plan of action in May of 1983, Premier Lougheed directed the Minister of Education to:

> "To have a special review undertaken forthwith of our curriculum to ascertain if there are any practical changes which could be made to foster greater tolerance and respect for minority groups in our society."
> - Premier Lougheed

Subsequently, the Minister of Education announced that the Department of Education would conduct a curriculum review to audit the program of studies, curriculum guides, textbooks and other learning resources approved for use by Alberta schools in order to:

> "Determine the adequacy of the ways in which tolerance, understanding and respect for minority groups and individuals are addressed and fostered;
>
> "Identify specific areas where changes are required;
>
> "Recommend appropriate follow-up action to be taken.

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding was given the mandate by the Minister of Education to supervise the curriculum review by Alberta Education in the conduct of this audit.

The Committee, in cooperation with representatives of the Department of Education, developed the following criteria against which the resource material would be judged:

1. Where judgements of others are to be made, do the programs and supporting materials promote fair assessments, avoiding unfair or inaccurate judgements based on alleged general characteristics relating to racial or ethnic origin, religious affiliation, age, sex or disability?

2. Do the programs and supporting materials help to nurture a positive self image in all students by taking an essentially positive approach to human similarities and differences arising from racial or ethnic origin, religious affiliation, age, sex or disability?

3. Do the programs and supporting materials contain either implicit or explicit generalizations relating to racial or ethnic origin, religious affiliation, age, sex or handicap that may tend to promote unfair or inaccurate judgements of individuals or groups?

4. Do the programs and supporting materials convey that excellence in human endeavour may be found in different ways in all human groups?

5. Do the programs and supporting materials, by omission, fail to take advantage or content or techniques that could assist the teacher in dealing positively with tolerance and understanding?

6. Do the programs and supporting materials implicitly and explicitly convey the nature and value of critical thinking in constructing our everyday interpretations of the world and the people within it?

These criteria were developed to identify shortcomings that arise both from what is included in the curriculum and what is not.

To conduct such an audit was an immense undertaking by Alberta Education. Over 3,600 resource materials authorized by Alberta Education were reviewed within a tight time frame in order that the findings could be utilized by the Committee.

The Committee would be remiss if it did not commend the extensive and excellent work of the Curriculum Audit Committee of the Department who, along with hundreds of educators, undertook the important and unprecedented task of conducting the review.

The commitment to the review stands as an important statement by the Government of the Province of Alberta of its commitment to ensure that our curriculum will be respectful of minority groups in our society.

By way of background, the 3,600 core resources that were reviewed by the Audit Committee included four classes of documents:

Legal- Program of studies

Service - Curriculum Guides

Support - Teacher's Manuals, monographs, teaching units, etc.

Instructional Materials - Textbooks and other print and non-print resources

Learning resources in Alberta fall into three general categories of "approval":

Prescribed Those print and non-print learning resources which may be prescribed by the Minister of Education as being the most important for meeting the majority of the goals of a curriculum

Recommended Those print and non-print learning resources which may be recommended by Alberta Education because they can make an important contribution to the attainment of one or more of the major goals of a curriculum.

Supplementary Those additional print and non-print learning resources which may be selected or produced to support a curriculum, by reinforcing or enriching the learning experience.

These categories notwithstanding, local school boards and their staff are not compelled to use "approved" learning resources. They may, under the School Act, add or substitute for the instructional materials "approved" by Alberta Education. While this arrangement leaves open the possibility of unacceptable materials being used by local choice, or for that matter, brought directly into the classroom by a teacher, it is the view of the Committee that a rigidly centralized curriculum would be inappropriate and would not be in keeping with the mission of education to provide critical thinking skills characterized by values based on

openness, inquiry, imagination, original ideas, dissent, rational thinking, creativity and independence.

Local school boards must have the freedom to pursue the best educational vision available to them, and be accountable for their decisions within the broad system of checks and balances within our educational system.

We must also trust the professional judgement of our teachers in the selection of the resource materials that they use in the classroom. There may be times when the professional judgement may be found to be lacking, as in the case of the Keegstra affair, however such situations are infrequent and we should not overreact to them.

In practice, the majority of local school boards and teachers closely follow the recommendations of Alberta Education with respect to curriculum.

The audit of programs and resources did not initially include those developed or selected by private schools, nor those locally developed in public schools, junior-senior high school handbooks, most supplementary learning resources, most teacher inservice materials developed by Access, and programs to be discontinued by 1984.

In response to the request of the Committee, the Department of Education is presently conducting a similar audit of curriculum utilized in some private schools in the Province of Alberta, known as A.C.E. (Accelerated Christian Education), Alpha Omega, Mennonite and A Beka.

In reviewing the findings of the Curriculum Audit Committee, it appears that the audit was fairly and professionally conducted within the time and resource constraints available.

The reviewers rated all materials into three categories:

1. Acceptable meets all or most of the criteria at acceptable levels. Faults are few or minor.

2. Problematic meets most of the criteria of adequacy, but suffers from one or more significant faults. Requires revision or instruction for teachers.

3. Unacceptable has major faults too serious to warrant further use in its present form. Requires extensive rewriting or replacement.

RESULTS OF CURRICULUM AUDIT REVIEW

The results of the findings of the Curriculum Audit Review Committee conducted by Alberta Education are positive and encouraging.

Over 90% of the approximately 3,600 resources reviewed in the audit were judged by the Audit Committee to be acceptable.

These findings speak well for the curriculum selection process in place by the Department for the past number of years, particularly considering the fact that the selection of resource materials was not conducted with a specific view in mind of meeting the criteria which was developed for the purpose of the Curriculum Audit in 1984.

It is not the intention of the Committee to repeat in this discussion paper, the Curriculum Audit Report. Copies can be obtained from the Department of Education.

By way of summary, the Report suggests the following:

> "The most common form of discrimination found was an inequitable use of male pronouns and male collective nouns. There are also specific examples of sexism. The most serious omission reported was the failure to recognize people with disabilities in any representative manner. Examples of discrimination related to age or religion were essentially non-existent. A very few books with examples of racial discrimination were found. In some cases steps have already be taken to delist the books. More subtle ethnic discrimination was reported in the form of failure to include specific groups in examples or failure in second language books to show ethnic groups as they fit into Canadian life, for example."

In the opinion of the Committee, the audit encountered its most serious difficulty when weighing the inadequacies of omissions referred to in the criteria 5. For instance, the following statements were made in the Audit Report:

> "In conclusion, relatively few cases were cited of curriculum materials that convey that excellence in human endeavour may be found in different ways in all human groups."
>
> "For the purpose of nurturing tolerance and understanding, the (Language Arts) curriculum guides should be judged as inadequate in most cases."
>
> "In conclusion, the cases that could be cited where curriculum documents take advantage of content to assist the teacher to deal positively with tolerance and understanding were relatively few."
>
> "In addition, critical thinking skills in mathematics, science, and practical arts, for example, are not directly applied to the assessment of historical forces, propaganda or prejudice."

An analysis of omissions in curriculum must be viewed from the perspective of long-range development of materials that will deal adequately and fairly with the positive aspects of our minorities.

Only two course outlines were given an unacceptable rating. Philosophy was rated unacceptable because it had an overly narrow orientation to classical western philosophical thinking, sexist language and an omission of religion as an aspect of philosophy. Secondary physical education was rated unacceptable because of its patronizing approach to females in athletic activities, and the total absence of any recognition of the needs of exceptional children.

The Committee is of the opinion that in the few cases where course outlines or resource materials are deemed to be unacceptable, that the usage of same should stop immediately. The Committee notes that even though a prior study classified a textbook known as "Flashback Canada" to be unacceptable due to its objectionable material relating to our Native people, that the book unfortunately is still being utilized in some Alberta schools.

The Committee was frequently cautioned by educators of the danger of following revisionist tendencies with respect to curriculum. Too rigid an approach to the evaluation of curriculum could result in removal of classic literary works, which would be neither appropriate nor desirable. It has been argued, and validly so, that although the literature may be objectionable today, it does allow us to learn about the period in which it was written. This material may be a useful learning resource in the classroom as a perspective on changing standards and values.

The Committee's recommendations in this regard take into consideration these concerns.

The process of developing and upgrading curriculum is a continuing task. The work of the Curriculum Audit Committee has created a new awareness of the standards anticipated by our society that should be recognized by the curriculum used in our school system.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the extensive Curriculum Audit Review conducted by the Department of Education is an indication that the curriculum being used in our public school system does not foster intolerance, prejudice or discrimination. Future consideration, however, must given to the ways and means by which our curriculum can more explicitly deal with enhancement of tolerance and understanding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the Recommendations contained in this section are taken, either completely or in part, from the recommendations contained in the Curriculum Audit Report.

1. That the Program Development Division in Alberta Education review and refine the audit process and integrate the tolerance criteria and equal rights into one checklist. Subsequently, the process should be incorporated into the curriculum branch's resource selection procedures for reviewing learning resources.

2. That the revised audit process and checklist should be used in a re-audit of all resources originally rated problematic or unacceptable. Minority groups' representatives should be consulted according to the problem area in question.

3. That unacceptable materials must be de-listed and immediately removed from all schools.

4. That alert notices should be attached to all current stock of materials in the schools containing problematic sections.

5. That problematic curriculum documents should be corrected by interim measures until the complete revised document is reprinted.

6. That acceptable curriculum documents that were flagged as containing minor problems should have revisionary supplements appended until the complete revised document is reprinted.

7. That alberta Education should prepare and distribute a monograph to assist teachers in nurturing tolerance and understanding in the schools.

8. That information should be provided to teachers for the use of problematic resources. The information should identify portions of the material to be avoided or provide alternate points of view to be presented if problem areas are to be included in lessons.

9. That Alberta Education should develop a monograph for modifying the curriculum for disabled students who are taking regular programs, in order to overcome the lack of representation of people with disabilities within current resource materials. The monograph should also include a sensitization program for non-disabled students.

10. That curriculum committees should be made aware of the findings of the curriculum audit and be required to use the tolerance and understanding criteria in current and future curriculum development and learning resource selection procedures.

11. That Alberta Education should convene a meeting of educators and publishers to acquaint them with the results of the curriculum audit review, and advise them of the incorporation of tolerance and understanding criteria in the ongoing review and selection process.

12. That local school boards should incorporate the six curriculum criteria for tolerance and understanding in their selection procedures utilized in their addition or substitution for instructional materials approved by Alberta Education.

13. That the Department of Education should provide copies of an executive summary of the Curriculum Audit Report to all teachers, to assist them in the selection of their own materials and resources.

Principle #4

THE MISSION OF EDUCATION

> "The basic mission of education, among others, should be to instill in our children:
>
> - a sense of self-esteem, the significance of which must never be understated;
> - the ability to develop critical thinking skills characterized by values based on openness, inquiry, imagination, original ideas, dissent, rational thinking, creativity and independence;
> - the appreciation of our democratic traditions, symbolized by an attitude of tolerance, understanding and respect for others, no matter what their origins and values may be;
> - an attitude of creative citizenship characterized by a sense of responsibility that must flow back from each citizen to the society in which he lives."

If our open democracy is to sustain itself and if individuals are to be capable of making their way competently and with self-esteem through the free marketplace of ideas and lifestyles, a child's education must equip him or her with the above qualities.

It is essential to the very perpetuation of our democratic institutions and by inclusion, the respect inherent in the system for the individual and his/her freedom of choices, that these qualities be developed and sustained so that our students learn to make judgments based on factual, objective knowledge and above all, independence of thought.

In order to meet this challenge, the key element is the teacher.

The Teacher

No matter how strong the curriculum, how beautiful the school, how expansive the facilities, how small the classes, it all comes down to the teacher and the teacher's ability to impart to the student the ability to develop these critical thinking skills, in the unending goal of pursuing excellence and truth.

Once the teacher enters the classroom and the door is closed, the impact of that person upon the child is probably secondary only to the parent.

The basic mission of education rests on the shoulders of our teachers.

"...the key to quality learning is quality teaching."
Gary Polonsky, Vice President, Lakeland College

The Committee was reminded by Dr. Ivan De Favari of the University of Alberta, that individual teachers functioning with considerable autonomy in individual classrooms are called upon to make complex judgments on a daily basis.

> "These judgments will best be made by teachers who have certain skills, have certain attitudes, accomplish certain things, have acquired certain relevant knowledge, and have certain dispositions... these teachers, for example, will be able to display certain accomplishments in regard to epistemological matters; they will be able to distinguish between things which are known and things which are believed, between fantasy and what is well grounded. They will, in regard to what is true, say that it is true, in regard to what is only probable that it is only probable. What is conjecture will be described as conjecture. In regard to moral matters, they will, for example, distinguish between their private likes and dislikes and the equality of concern their institutional role demands that they show all students. In regard to social matters, they will, for example, realize that their public role as a teacher may demand actions that are at variance with their private morality. They will, in regard to all matters that they teach, be well informed. They will, in their dealings with students, display emotional reactions which are reasonable and not gratuitously neurotic. They will realize that their personal autobiographical experiences may not guarantee an enlightened view of the world, and continually try to learn more about the world. In trying to solve a problem involving human interaction, they will look toward the removal of its causes as well as alleviating the symptoms.... There is nothing new in this conception. It is the traditional idea of a liberally educated person, at least as old as Socrates, but now needed more than ever, since the vision of it that has at times been clear has now been obscured by the rise of technological demands. Thus the person who is in the best position to deal with issues related to tolerance is the liberally educated person."

The Committee is of the view that though a liberal education provides the necessary academic background, it must be complemented with an extensive program in teaching techniques, methodology and practicum.

Teachers must be trained in the area of their specialization and must have the skills and techniques to teach a particular subject matter in the classroom.

The importance of teacher training cannot be overstated.

> "Competent, caring teachers are the most important requirement for providing effective education to our children. Teacher education affairs have never received the attention and consideration warranted by their importance. This imbalance needs to be corrected."
>
> Alberta Teachers' Association, December, 1983
> Comments on ASTA Task Force Report on Teacher Education

It is vital that the Faculties of Education at our post secondary institutions re-examine their teacher education programs in light of the concerns raised at our hearings, in respect to admission requirements, screening of education students, courses of study and the scope and duration of practicum programs.

> "Presently, the faculty of education has ambivalent purposes, and in its pursuit of multiple purposes it tends to lose sight of its own major goal: to educate future teachers and not merely to train them. On the one hand it wants students to become liberally educated; on the other hand it also wants to promote the technical expertise future teachers will need. I believe the University's best contribution would be made if it placed more emphasis on the cultivation of well-educated future teachers, and emphasize less those aspects of the teacher education program that deal with the technical aspects of teaching. These could be learned during periods of student teaching (which have now been extended), or learned on the job. Indeed, there is reason to believe that when learned on the job they are learned more quickly and with more lasting effect."
>
> Dr. Ivan De Favari, University of Alberta

It is beyond the mandate of the Committee to suggest ways by which our teachers can receive better training in our post-secondary institutions. It is, however, clear from the many expressions of concern received by the Committee, that there is a general agreement in Alberta that new approaches to teacher education must be developed.

> "If our future educators are to be equal to the task of playing a vital role in maintaining and ensuring the quality of human existence in our society, bold and courageous steps must be taken now to help teachers anticipate and prepare for this challenge."
>
> The Education of Teachers in Alberta: A Model for the Future
> (Dean's Paper, May, 1984)

> "The faculties of education should be held accountable to: teach teachers how to teach process objectives, i.e. how to learn, how to remember, how to think critically and how to motivate themselves, and teach teachers to be excellent, i.e. student centred, self efficacious, desirous of influencing others and highly valuative of the learning process."
>
> Gary Polonsky, Vice President, Lakeland College

Teaching is a profession that requires special personal attributes that may be very difficult to impart in a formal program of studies, and this must be taken into account in teacher selection. Not everyone is suited to teaching, and the role model effect of teachers is so powerful that we must be very selective about who is given this responsibility.

> "That selection procedures at the time of admission and screening activities during the early years of the preservice program should include identification of the personal attributes of the successful teacher, e.g. insight, curiosity and a critical mind, enthusiasm, imagination and creativity, maturity and judgement, and tolerance and understanding of others."
>
> The Education of Teachers in Alberta: A Model for the Future
> (Dean's Paper, May, 1984)

The education of a teacher has only just begun when he or she receives the teaching certificate. Rapid changes in our society and the knowledge explosion requires constant upgrading and refinement of teaching skills.

The ATA has demonstrated its commitment to professional development by many positive actions in the last twelve years which include guidelines for teachers to help them deal with issues of intolerance or prejudice, specialist councils and a Stereotyping and Discriminating Practices Committee.

By communicating and consulting with parents and community groups new opportunities can be identified on a continual basis to ensure personal and professional development that will aid in the classroom and community.

> "Successful teaching requires individuals who have sound knowledge and skill, and who know how to review critically their own teaching performance to ensure continual refinement and growth and effectiveness...A constant interplay between theory and practice is essential in teacher education and in teaching; reflection on the act of teaching should be an essential outgrowth of classroom experiences both on campus and in schools."
>
> The Education of Teachers in Alberta: A Model for the Future
> (Dean's Paper, May, 1984)

With committed professionals it is vital that greater care be taken by the school boards in making appointments in areas of specialization to ensure that teachers have the appropriate skills and knowledge in the subject field to which they are assigned.

Evaluation of Teaching

In the Preamble to this discussion paper, the Committee referred on page 3 to five important questions presented to the Committee that arose as a result of the teachings of Mr. Keegstra.

The first two questions centered around the issues of the evaluation of teachers, their conduct, performance and competency, and the role of the principal, the local school board and the local school superintendent in evaluating and overseeing the conduct of the teacher within their jurisdictions.

After the exposure of the Keegstra affair, Albertans asked the questions "How did it go on so long without being detected?" "Where were the parents?" "Why didn't the principal put a stop to it?" Why didn't the local school board and its superintendent deal with the issue?" and "Why was the ATA so slow in disciplining its member?"

We have dealt with the last question in the section titled "Professionalism" on page 11 of this discussion paper, but the other questions come down to an expression of the need for improved methods of evaluation and supervision, to go along with improved preservice and inservice training.

We must be careful not to overreact to the perceived distortions of the Keegstra affair. If we become too prescriptive in our recommendations, the result will be to discourage the free flow of information and discussion that is necessary in in the classroom.

On the other hand, we must have safeguards to ensure that teachers do not abuse the freedoms given to them by using the classroom as a forum for the expression of prejudicial attitudes based on the distortion of history which the teacher may wish to indoctrinate into the student.

We leave considerable leeway to the professional judgment of our teachers, and that is appropriate. Society has very high expectations of its teachers, and from time to time society needs to be reassured that its teachers are conducting themselves at the highest possible level.

Evaluation can be a positive experience for teachers, if dealt with sensitively and properly. It offers a constructive opportunity for peer group assistance, feedback and professional development.

We were told that in some schools teachers are never or rarely evaluated. In other school jurisdictions in Alberta, there exists a very defined and reasoned process of evaluation which undoubtedly is of great assistance to the teachers and is not regarded as threatening, e.g. Fort McMurray.

In 1984, Alberta Education circulated a statement with respect to provincial evaluation policies. These policies, supported by the Committee, include specifications for teacher evaluation. A similar statement should be issued by Alberta Education with respect to the topics of Principal Evaluation and Superintendent Evaluation, which are presently lacking.

Teachers must earn the trust of parents and must also be accountable within flexible parameters.

> "To be effective in our society, teachers need to work in an atmosphere of trust and confidence. They need public support and they need public recognition. In turn, they must accept the responsibility to pursue the defined goals, to meet the standards of professional conduct and to continually endeavour to improve their professional competence. It also means that school authorities must supervise and evaluate the performance of teachers to ensure the quality of instruction."
>
> K.A. Jesse, Superintendent, Red Deer Public Schools

Evaluation should then follow due process and distinguish between competence, conduct and performance.

Evaluation should acknowledge and report excellence as well as diagnose performance.

Within this process, care must be taken to ensure that the personal and professional esteem of the teacher is not jeopardized. Teachers cannot be expected to nurture feelings of self-esteem among students if they do not have it themselves.

Built within the system must be a process whereby, if the teacher is failing in performance, assistance must be forthcoming. If all efforts to improve the performance fail, the system must have an expeditious mechanism to terminate that teacher's practice.

We believe that teachers welcome evaluation if it is conducted on a proper basis.

Evaluation must be conducted on an ongoing basis by the local school board. Conduct of such evaluation must be clear, concise and known to the teachers.

In Alberta we are blessed with an abundance of excellent, dedicated teachers. We must remember that teachers face stress in their work. We must understand that aside from the courses they conduct, many are involved in extra-curricular activities, personal development programs and many emotionally draining activities related to their employment. Often, the teaching load is disproportionate, in that good teachers are sought out by more students and accept more responsibilities.

Tired teachers can be intolerant, and we must be careful not to overextend their teaching loads.

But the teaching profession cannot afford to be seen to harbour incompetent, lazy or unethical teachers.

The public must feel confident that every reasonable effort is made by local school boards to remove teachers who do not fulfill their obligations to their students.

Pride in work, recognition of good work, and ongoing professional development should characterize the practice of teaching. Along with this positive atmosphere, the community must recognize the difficult and crucial work that teachers carry out and be prepared to assist our teaching profession in every manner possible.

The Principal as Educational Leader

The principal personifies the school and sets the climate of the school environment.

The principal must stand ultimately responsible for problems that arise within the school that he/she is charged to lead.

Major initiatives have been conducted by the Alberta School Trustees Association, Alberta Education and the School Superintendents, to develop guidelines dealing with the role of the principal in the school. In submissions presented to the Committee, we were advised of the view that some Albertans perceive an inadequacy in the training of individuals for the role of principal.

> "Most principals are appointed to their positions because of their success as teachers. Few if any have great competence to perform their duties as supervisors or evaluators, the job for which they were hired....Both their university and on the job training are wholly inadequate for the job."
>
> Dr. Ralph Levinson, Olds College

We have also heard of principals who, without any formal training in administration, perform excellent work in the area of their responsibilities, and we can only conclude that the system is very uneven.

In recognition of the principal's role in a school, the Committee is of the opinion that new standards and procedures should be put into place to ensure that principals have the necessary skills to perform their duties.

As a result, the Committee is recommending that the Government of the Province of Alberta consider putting into place a principal certification program whereby all principals in the Province would, over time, be required to fulfill certification requirements recognizing their academic competency to fulfill their responsibilities.

Similarly, the Government of the Province of Alberta should consider putting into place a superintendent certification program to ensure that those educators employed as superintendents by local school boards have the qualifications necessary to meet their responsibilities.

CONCLUSIONS

A sound education system is based on the partnership of the teacher, the principal, the school superintendent and the local school board. If any one or more of these partners fails in the conduct of his responsibilities, a Keegstra affair could arise again. However, if local school boards set out clear but flexible policy statements relating to such matters as evaluation, use of curriculum in the schools and teacher performance, and if these policies are followed, it is unlikely that a reocurrence of a Keegstra affair could become a reality.

In addition, however, the Committee is of the opinion that the creation of the Board of Teacher Standards referred to in this discussion paper will act as a safeguard for the public, who will have an impartial body to contact, in confidence, to express their grievances.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Government of Alberta consider the implementation of a principal certification program to involve all principals in Alberta schools.

2. That the Government of Alberta consider the implementation of a superintendent certification program to involve all superintendents in Alberta schools.

3. That the Government of Alberta consider the preparation and implementation of a policy statement with respect to the evaluation of principals and school superintendents.

Principle #5

FLEXIBILITY AND STRENGTH OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

> "The public education system (which in this report is deemed to include the separate school system) is the prime vehicle by which Alberta society meets its duty to its children in its endeavour to achieve its basic goals of education. Wherever possible, the public education system must be strengthened and society must not permit it to become unnecessarily weakened, eroded or fragmented. Financial priorities must be given to the assistance of teachers, School Boards, their administrations and libraries, in order that they fulfill their responsibility of educating our children. School Boards, as a matter of policy, must provide maximum educational opportunities for all students resident in their jurisdiction."

We believe that the public school system in the Province of Alberta is strong and it has displayed, in most areas, the necessary flexibility to meet its duty to Alberta children to achieve the basic goals of education.

Education and the well-being of our society are inextricably intertwined. Any society that has a sense of the future, as does ours, must continue to allocate a substantial part of its resources to education. The distribution of these resources and the programs they make possible are carried out by the public education system.

In stating our principle on the importance of maintaining a strong public education system we are not proposing to eliminate privately initiated alternative schools. Strength is not best achieved by eliminating choice and competition. We believe that the public system is more likely to stay vital, responsive and committed to quality of education if there is a variety of educational services and real parental involvement in choosing and shaping programs. Efforts to strengthen public education should not have the effect of stifling educational initiatives. Our society needs all the resources, creativity and dedication that it can provide in the task of preparing our children to manage the future.

The Committee has been advised of the concern of some Albertans regarding the alleged lack of flexibility in programs in the public school system.

It has been suggested to the Committee that Albertans are leaving the public schools in great numbers.

Such statements are erroneous. There are 424,659 pupils in Alberta's public schools, 11,850 in private schools. In 1940, 2.3% of students were in private schools, and this has grown by only 0.4% to 2.7% today.

An examination of the myriad of programs available in the public school system leads the Committee to the conclusion that the system has proven to be very flexible in the availability of support services for school jurisdictions and the variety of programs available to students.

Examples can be found in programs relating to:

- per pupil grants for the support of instructional programs
- Early Childhood Services
- Alberta Correspondence School
- night school and extension services
- mature students and the Adult High School Equivalency Diploma
- vocational education grants
- extension program grants
- community school grants
- special education services
- Educational Opportunities Fund
- Learning Disabilities Fund
- Decline in Enrolment Grants
- Private School Opening Grants
- Small School Assistance Grants
- Small School Jurisdiction Grants
- Teacher Location Grants
- Teacher Housing Unit Grants

In 1983, $1.74 billion was invested in basic education in this province.

In light of the Provincial Government's contribution to this amount, it must be noted that an integral factor is the responsibility and local autonomy given to local school boards.

The existence of a wide array of programs, services and grants from the Government of Alberta is not of itself sufficient. The test of the strength of the public school system will be in the judgement of the local school boards in ensuring the excellence of the services and programs being provided.

The public school system is not without its critics.

The most frequent criticism lodged with the Committee by some Albertans was that the public education system is not value-oriented and is secular-humanistic in its approach.

In the section "Respect for Diversity" at page 18 of this discussion paper, we referred to the goals of education, ethics, policy statements and ideals of various stakeholders in the field of public education.

All of these statements, particularly the Government's statements relating to the development of desirable personal characteristics, are expressions of the values which are basic to our way of life, our respect of human life, our tolerance and understanding and our respect for each other. The reader will find on the following page the position of the Government of Alberta, in place since September, 1981, with regard to the role the schools must play in the development of desirable personal characteristics among children of school age.

DEVELOPING DESIRABLE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Ethical/Moral Characteristics

Respectful	— has respect for the opinions and rights of others, and for property.
Responsible	— accepts responsibility for own actions. Discharges duties in a satisfactory manner.
Fair just	— behaves in an open, consistent and equitable manner.
Tolerant	— is sensitive to other points of view, but able to reject extreme or unethical positions, free from undue bias and prejudice.
Honest	— is truthful, sincere, possessing integrity, free from fraud or deception.
Kind	— is generous, compassionate, understanding, considerate.
Forgiving	— is conciliatory, excusing; ceases to feel resentment toward someone.
Committed to democratic ideals	— displays behavior consistent with the principles inherent in the social, legal and political institutions of this country.
Loyal	— is dependable, faithful, devoted to friends, family and country.

2. Intellectual Characteristics

Open-minded	— delays judgements until evidence is considered and listens to other points of view.
Thinks critically	— analyzes the pros and cons, explores for and considers alternatives before reaching a decision.
Intellectually curious	— is inquisitive, inventive, self-initiated, searches for knowledge.
Creative	— expresses self in an original but constructive manner, seeks new solutions to problems and issues.
Pursues excellence	— has internalized the need for doing his/her best in every field of endeavour.
Appreciative	— recognizes aesthetic values. Appreciates intellectual accomplishments and the power of human strivings.

3. Social/Personal Characteristics

Cooperative	— works with others to achieve common aims.
Accepting	— is willing to accept others as equals.
Conserving	— behaves responsibly toward the environment and the resources therein.
Industrious	— applies himself/herself diligently, without supervision.
Possesses a strong sense of self worth	— is confident and self-reliant, believes in own ability and worth.
Persevering	— pursues goals in spite of obstacles.
Prompt	— is punctual, completes assigned tasks on time.
Neat	— organizes work in an orderly manner, pays attention to personal appearance.
Attentive	— is alert and observant, listens carefully.
Unselfish	— is charitable, dedicated to humanitarian principles.
Mentally and physically fit	— possesses a healthy, sound attitude toward life, seeks and maintains an optimum level of bodily health.

We found that fully half the characteristics included in this list are central to tolerance, understanding and basic value systems, namely:

- **Respectful** - has respect for the opinions and rights of others and for property
- **Fair, just** - behaves in an open, consistent and equitable manner
- **Tolerant** - is sensitive to other points of view, but able to reject extreme or unethical positions, free from undue bias and prejudice
- **Honest** - is truthful, sincere, possessing integrity, free from fraud or deception
- **Kind** - is generous, compassionate, understanding, considerate
- **Forgiving** - is conciliatory, excusing, ceases to feel resentment toward someone
- **Committed to democratic ideals** - displays behavior consistent with the principles inherent in the social, legal, and political institutions of this country
- **Open-minded** - delays judgments until evidence is considered and listens to other points of view
- **Thinks critically** - analyzes the pros and cons, explores for and considers alternatives before reaching a decision
- **Cooperative** - works with others to achieve common aims
- **Accepting** - is willing to accept others as equals
- **Possesses a strong sense of self-worth** - is confident and self-reliant, believes in own ability and worth
- **Unselfish** - is charitable, dedicated to humanitarian principles

The public education system has a strong commitment to character development, which is realized through the valuable learning process in the school. The challenge still remains, however, of translating the often expressed ideals into morally directed programs and practices.

Within the public school system 20% of Alberta students are in Catholic schools. It is demonstrated by the Catholic schools in this province that a religious context for education does not, in and of itself, create intolerance or narrow-minded learning. The success of the Catholic schools in developing a religious ideology that permeates the formal education of their children, illustrates a vital principle; it is not the disagreement of one person with another that implies intolerance, but rather it is the damning of one person or of the group of another and the attempt to subject that person to suffering that is intolerant.

This principle of fairness and consideration in advocating and holding views is central to the functioning of our democracy, and public education must follow this principle by showing the same fairness and consideration to all beliefs and philosophies. In turn, all religiously-based schools must operate with the same tolerance, understanding and respect, not only for other people's views, but also of each individual child's need to be equipped with critical thinking skills, openness and creativity.

Within our public school system there are many examples which show the flexibility of the system to embrace religiously and/or culturally oriented schools of different faiths and cultures.

An obvious example is the existence of Hutterite schools funded by, and accountable to, local school jurisdictions.

The County of Barrhead has one school in Neerlandia that operates as a religiously-based school because of a high percentage of parents in that community who wish their faith to be part of their children's education. Parents joined together in a society to work with the Board in guiding the school program.

> "...we as a Society have no legal status or authority within the County of Barrhead, but do operate in much the same manner as would a local advisory board...It is our purpose to work as a team with the County Board of Education to promote greater understanding, respect, appreciation and freedom for various educational needs and philosophies within the public school system. To be sure there are varying opinions within our community on a range of educational issues, but the overall concern is that through parental involvement in a cooperative arrangement with the County Board, the best educational resources available will be utilized in a system that not only tolerates, but promotes justice for all."
>
> Society for the Promotion of Christian Education, Neerlandia

Other examples can be found in the Edmonton Hebrew School and the Menno Simons School in the Fairview School Division.

Clearly, the public education system has, when called upon to do so, exhibited a flexibility which can readily incorporate religiously and/or culturally based schools within its structure.

The above points illustrate to the Committee that value systems do exist in public education and that the system has proven that value systems do not conflict with public education.

For those parents who prefer to organize schooling for their children in an atmosphere of more intensive religious training, the Committee has suggested in its discussion paper on Private Education that these schools should continue, and be funded by Government on the present basis, so long as they provide minimum standards of education and become accountable to local school jurisdictions in order to strike a balance between the necessity for the diversity of basic educational services, while minimizing the potential for isolation between the diverse elements.

CONCLUSIONS

The only way for public education to maintain its strength and integrity is for it to become more than the established institutions, bureaucracies and programs for the mainstream. Public education must become a confederation of the whole community, consisting of all educational programs which receive public support. We should expect nothing less in our open democratic society.

This broader approach to public education will require trust, respect and cooperation among all those involved, but also a high degree of flexibility on the part of the educational administrations now in place. One of the major barriers to tolerance and understanding is the narrow and rigid institutionalization of education. Alternative programs must be protected from unnecessary bureaucratic regulation by the larger structure, and the mainline administrative structures must preserve the high levels of autonomy that exist because of parental or community initiatives.

Although every Board must see to it that every child within its jurisdiction is provided with maximum educational opportunities, we do not envision every board as necessarily meeting these diverse needs within their existing program of operations. The confederation view of public education that we endorse acknowledges the reality of parental obligations to ensure the best possible education for their children, and permits initiatives for the development, improvement or adaptation of programs to be taken by groups of parents as well as the professionals and elected officials who run the system. In the field of education, no single organization is likely to be able to provide for all the detailed needs of every different group. A reasonable solution is to open up the organization so that it is able to delegate or cooperate with other smaller organizations as the need arises.

On balance the public education system has a very solid base of support and is sufficiently flexible to keep that support, provided we adopt a broader view of public education and develop the means to spread the initiatives that have already been demonstrated to other parts of the system where they are needed.

RECOMMENDATION

That public school boards be encouraged to provide alternative programs in areas such as religion, comparative religion, language and culture if the demand is sufficient and the facilities and teachers are available.

Principle #6

SHARED EXPERIENCES

> "In order to enhance tolerance and understanding and respect for each individual within the diverse mosaic that is so characteristic of Alberta, we must wherever possible encourage shared experiences in our schools among children of different cultures, races, religions, philosophies and ethnic backgrounds."

Tolerance, understanding and respect cannot be learned in the abstract. Each is an essential element of the way we conduct ourselves in our day to day relationships with others.

> "Truly 'breeding' tolerance and understanding in society, does not come at conference tables...rather it comes at lunch tables...It doesn't come from seminars conducted by experts, rather...it comes from regular associations in our everyday lives."
>
> Geraldine A. Walton, Cardston

Education must be continuously guided by an overarching vision of what the whole enterprise is meant to achieve. There is the danger of restricting our vision to "learning through being told" because that is the least expensive. Yet we know that "telling" by itself is never enough to develop competence, for it leaves out the attitudes and skills necessary to use one's knowledge in the complexity of real-world situations.

Solid, practical understanding comes only through combinations of personal experience, learning from others, reflection, and a desire to improve oneself. Throughout history people have designed their best learning arrangements to include all of these different elements.

Tolerance and understanding, like all other personal characteristics, grow and develop from combining personal experience, guidance from others, reflection and a desire to improve oneself. Thus any efforts to foster tolerance and understanding in the school environment must include all of these elements.

Contact with other people is essential, but it is equally important that the other things be in place so that the experience gained is used productively as a source of learning and growth.

Because contact is a source of learning, and not the whole of it, experience with others can lead to greater levels of intolerance if the context and the intentions of the people involved are not positive. Productive shared experience occurs only when the activity is mutually agreeable and there is a sense of fundamental equality and interdependence.

It is important not to oversimplify the human development issues involved in nurturing tolerance and understanding, but as we have said in our previous discussion papers, it is striking how often other people of good will have sorted it out and arrived at similar conclusions. The complexity of the problem is not beyond common sense and we have heard from hundreds of Albertans who know the importance of ensuring a balanced relationship between knowledge, experience and principle.

> "We encourage our children to get to know others of different religious persuasions, ethnic backgrounds, and lifestyles by getting to know the kids on the block, by visiting ethnic fairs and Hutterite colonies, by watching and discussing T.V. shows, by reading books and magazines like Alberta Culture, and by setting an example for our children in our own attitudes."
>
> Mr. and Mrs. G. Snip, Lethbridge

We were impressed by the suggestions of Albertans who responded to an invitation to "share their viewpoint" in a brief questionnaire that we distributed in our travels around the province. This was an invitation to share one's thoughts more simply and conveniently than preparing a formal brief, and not a scientific study of attitudes in Alberta. Although the sample size is not large (120), it does represent an interesting perspective that confirms many of the things we had heard in our public hearings.

For instance, when asked what was the best way to develop tolerance, understanding and respect, the largest category of response was personal involvement with others, with education and school programs coming a close second. When asked which school activities develop tolerance, understanding and respect, the largest category was "doing things together", things like sports, drama, music, field trips and exchange programs. The next largest category of response was social studies programs.

The same pattern is repeated, with even greater emphasis when people are asked to identify the best ways of achieving tolerance, understanding and respect outside of the school context. Shared activities, including community involvement, youth groups, recreational activities, or even just talking to others, were suggested nearly twice as often as the next largest category of response, the use of communications media.

The following are examples of combinations of ideas that people suggested would develop tolerance, understanding and respect:

> "Be involved in your local community; work as volunteers in civic and other areas; invite minority guest speakers; invite other Canadians to visit mosques, temples, community organizations; Be a human being."
>
> Mohammad Fazil, Calgary

> "Group activities; sports; audio visual presentations; role reversal; historical accounts and resource persons."
>
> Martin Graham, Edmonton

> "Study life skills established to develop self discipline; self and peer pressure discussion groups; decision making programs; exchange programs; facing difficult situations head on and gently."
>
> Lilli-Ann Wells, Olds

"Religion classes, integrated co- and extra-curricular activities, films, novels used in classes showing prejudice."

R. Goerg, Grimshaw

"Some activities would be to get different people from different nationalities to form some kind of club so that they can meet each other. But first you must get the students to be aware that there is, in fact, prejudice in the school by students and maybe even teachers."

Lorlie Woitski, Grande Prairie

One of the strong virtues of public schools that must be preserved, encouraged, and developed further is their potential in providing a source of shared experience for all the residents in a community.

Public schools, especially elementary and smaller junior high schools, draw their students from the surrounding neighbourhood, the diversity among students will depend on the diversity of the immediate community, and obviously this varies. Large high schools usually draw from enough different communities to ensure a more representative cross section, but their large size and depersonalization can sometimes lead to in-group formations that limit the shared experience with students of different backgrounds.

Public schools have great potential to provide significant shared experiences because, taken together, they serve all but a small percentage of the students in our communities. It is up to the administration, teachers and parents to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the diversity in the whole system to see that the shared experiences actually happen.

"We have peer tutoring programs at our school where students of different cultures are paired and encouraged to teach and learn from one another."

Sandy Mann, Calgary

Schools serving a homogeneous population base can team with other schools for some of their activities. Large schools can ensure that their atmosphere and school spirit is such that students can mix with each other in pursuit of shared goals, and that they learn something from the experience.

Shared experience will provide a good source of learning only if the experience itself is worthwhile and engaging. Shared tedium is not likely to enrich understanding. Experiences that demand the most and allow the greatest scope for individual contribution also appear to teach the most about the people involved.

> "Students need to be involved in cooperative learning experiences where all students contribute in some way to the group."
>
> Glenda McCue, Lethbridge

We have heard much about the mutual understanding and respect that develops among participants during difficult and challenging field trips, concert tours, athletic competitions, and the like. In these situations each person is more likely to find some area where he or she can make a contribution, and the stereotypes that are easily maintained in more narrow circumstances fall by the wayside.

We have seen excellent examples of public schools where the staff and parents were aware of the larger mission of education. They give much of themselves to inject challenging and interesting experiences into the curriculum, to run a rich program of extra curricular activities and build a school spirit that emphasizes personal character and growth.

> "...our community school worked hard at achieving these goals, projects and curriculum were always projecting a positiveness towards understanding the individual or circumstance. Recognizing that the classroom was a blend of individuals, with such unique qualities, was the beginning of acceptance of each other's thoughts, actions and ideals...Teaching positive attitudes and commitment to rightfulness makes the children attending this school a very special first, they feel involved through example and tolerant because they experience it constantly."
>
> Sherry Martin, Edmonton

We have also seen examples of public schools where the staff and parents appear to be intimidated by excessive bureaucratic regulation or a narrow preoccupation with the curriculum. In these circumstances the broader goals of education are frequently seen as an unrealistic dream.

CONCLUSION

We firmly believe that public education has a vital role to play in fostering tolerance and understanding. To do so, we must keep our principles clearly before us and govern our actions, program development and priorities by these principles. As we do this, the reality of a rich base of shared experience will naturally follow.

RECOMMENDATION

In recognition of the value of productive shared experiences as a vital component of school life, it is recommended:

> That all school jurisdictions initiate a comprehensive, system-wide plan to increase the opportunities for shared experiences, both in the school and the community.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

"PROFESSIONALISM"

1. That the Minister of Education place an immediate priority on legislation that would ensure that teachers enjoy full professional status in Alberta, including the right to self-governance.

2. That the ATA and ASTA place immediate priority on reaching consensus with the Minister of Education in respect of the specific provisions of such legislation to be contained in a new Teaching Profession Act.

3. That the Minister of Education convene an open conference with representatives of the ATA and ASTA in order to reach an acceptable consensus for a new Teaching Profession Act.

4. That the Minister of Education place on the agenda the conceptual model contained in this discussion paper for the purposes of initiating discussion and providing the basis for further debate.

PRINCIPLE #1 - "RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY"

1. That in respect to the Government of Alberta's initiative to establish Goals of Education and Schooling, a formal review mechanism be put into place to ensure that their relevancy and purpose remain current and that they are ratified by each session of the Legislative Assembly.

2. That the Department of Education require from each school jurisdiction a written statement of philosophy and code of ethics to be reviewed and ratified by each Board of Trustees upon election to office.

3. That the Department of Education put on permanent display in every school in the province the statement of the Goals of Education and the Goals of Schooling in the Province of Alberta.

4. In recognition of the fact that public education will not meet the aspirations of all parents, it is recommended that privately initiated alternative schools be eligible for public funding if the following criteria are met:

- use of certified teachers
- use of approved curriculum
- affiliation with a local school jurisdiction
- assumption of all costs over and above the 75% per student costs presently granted by Alberta Education

PRINCIPLE #2 - "PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT"

1. That every school board should formulate, implement and communicate a policy designed to foster parental involvement with the schools. This policy should increase awareness and understanding of:

- parental rights and responsiblities
- details of the administrative structure including the responsibilities and duties of school trustees, superintendents and principals in the school jurisdiction
- role of the Department of Education in terms of support services and curriculum development
- policies and procedures relative to reporting parental concerns
- ways in which parents can become involved in the activities of the school

2. That every school jurisdiction should require that each school prepare a written philosophy in consultation with students, parents and/or guardians and community representatives. Subject to annual ratification the school philosophy would include:

- identification of opportunities for parents and/or guardians, grandparents, ethnic and cultural groups, special needs associations

and other community resource groups to become part of a resource base for the local school

- establishment of a mechanism in each school by which any or all of the above groups can volunteer their services
- preparation and implementation of a code of behaviour as agreed upon by representatives from the students, teachers and parents or guardians.

3. The Department of Education compile a catalogue of all existing policies, procedures and programs that have been put in practice by local school jurisdictions to encourage parental involvement and that the catalogue be distributed to all school jurisdictions for resource purposes.

PRINCIPLE #3 - "RIGHT OF THE CHILD"

Philosophy and Focus

That the ATA review its code of ethics and standards of professional conduct and make revisions which will identify the teacher's responsibility to the child as a teacher's highest priority.

Exceptional Children

1. That the Department of Education, in implementing its Special Block Funding Plan, recognize the fundamental principle that in respect to the placement of the child in a particular school, the responsibility is shared equally between the parent and the local school jurisdiction.

2. That a local appeal mechanism be established to resolve disputes between parents and school jurisdictions regarding the placement of a child.

3. That the Department of Education specifically designate the amount of funding available to a privately initiated alternative Category II school for each child who qualifies.

4. That the Department of Education establish diagnostic centres, in cooperation with the faculties of education at Calgary and Edmonton. The diagnostic centres to provide:

- the capability to diagnose children referred by local school boards
- research centre to develop new technology and techniques
- a centre for training teachers in diagnostic techniques

"CURRICULUM AUDIT"

1. That the Program Development Division in Alberta Education review and refine the audit process and integrate the tolerance criteria and equal rights into one checklist. Subsequently, the process should be incorporated into the curriculum branch's resource selection procedures for learning resources.

2. That the revised audit process and checklist should be used in a re-audit of all resources originally rated problematic or unacceptable. Minority groups' representatives should be consulted according to the problem area in question.

3. That unacceptable materials must be de-listed and immediately removed from all schools.

4. That alert notices should be attached to all current stock of materials in the schools containing problematic sections.

5. That problematic curriculum documents should be corrected by interim measures until the complete revised document is reprinted.

6. That acceptable curriculum documents that were flagged as containing minor problems should have revisionary supplements appended until the complete revised document is reprinted.

7. That Alberta Education should prepare and distribute a monograph to assist teachers in nurturing tolerance and understanding in the schools.

8. That information should be provided to teachers for the use of problematic resources. The information should identify portions of the material to be avoided or provide alternate points of view to be presented if problem areas are to be included in lessons.

9. That Alberta Education should develop a monograph for modifying the curriculum for disabled students who are taking regular programs, in order to overcome the lack of representation of people with disabilities within current resource materials. The monograph should also include a sensitization program for non-disabled students.

10. That curriculum committees should be made aware of the findings of the curriculum audit and be required to use the tolerance and understanding criteria in current and future curriculum development and learning resource selection procedures.

11. That Alberta Education should convene a meeting of educators and publishers to acquaint them with the results of the curriculum audit review, and advise them of the incorporation of tolerance and understanding criteria in the ongoing review and selection process.

12. That local school boards should incorporate the six curriculum criteria for tolerance and understanding in their selection procedures utilized in their addition or substitution for instructional materials approved by Alberta Education.

13. That the Department of Education should provide copies of an executive summary of the Curriculum Audit Report to all teachers, to assist them in the selection of their own materials and resources.

PRINCIPLE #4 - "THE MISSION OF EDUCATION"

1. That the Government of Alberta consider the implementation of a principal certification program to involve all principals in Alberta schools.

2. That the Government of Alberta consider the implementation of a superintendent certification program to involve all superintendents in Alberta schools.

3. That the Government of Alberta consider the preparation and implementation of a policy statement with respect to the evaluation of principals and school superintendents.

PRINCIPLE #5 - "FLEXIBILITY AND STRENGTH OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS"

That public school boards be encouraged to provide alternative programs in areas such as religion, comparative religion, language and culture if the demand is sufficient and the facilities and teachers are available.

PRINCIPLE #6 - "SHARED EXPERIENCES"

That all school jurisdictions initiate a comprehensive, system-wide plan to increase the opportunities for shared experiences, both in the school and the community.